IRENE COOPER WILLIS

ENGLAND'S HOLY WAR

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ENGLAND'S HOLY WAR

A STUDY
OF ENGLISH LIBERAL IDEALISM
DURING
THE GREAT WAR

BY
IRENE COOPER WILLIS

1928
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FOREWORD

BY *J. A. HOBSON*

Author of Problems of a New World; Incentives in the New Industrial Order; Economics of Unemployment; Free Thought in the Social Sciences, Etc.

MUCH has been written about the part played by Press Propaganda during the war and the period of so-called peace-making that followed. The related arts of skilled mendacity and facile credulity were a new revelation of human faculties. Most of this work was done by politicians, journalists and other literary gentlemen who deemed it to be their patriotic duty to suspend the ordinary canons of truth in the interests of victory, and to allow their inventive imagination a license fitted to the needs of the situation. These men knew what they were doing; they were out to raise the morale of the nation so that it might undergo the necessary sacrifices of life and money. Doubtless most of them came easily to believe in the nobilities they attributed to their men and the atrocities which belonged to the enemy, for such belief belongs to the artistic temperament.

But a special and particularly interesting study in press propagandism is presented here by Miss Cooper Willis, namely that of the strange and ingenious attitudes and writh-

ings by which the Liberal Idealism of England was harnessed to the war chariot. A Liberal Government held office. It had repeatedly declared that we had no obligation to fight a continental war, not even for the neutrality of Belgium. The Liberal press was definitely pacifist right up to the outbreak of war. It was not even convinced by Sir Edward Grey's statement on August 3. But when it did come in quickly but reluctantly, it had to go the whole spiritual hog. The war had to be a "Holy War," to enable these editors and writers to devour, with a sacramental gusto, all they had said and written in the past. Miss Cooper Willis reproduces with brief pungent interpretation the passages which explain the mixed mental processes by which they came, not merely to accept, but to glory in a war that was to be the final overthrow of militarism and the liberation of all oppressed peoples. That the "War to End War" should be "A Fight to a Finish" was really a spiritual economy. Never again! was the spiritual slogan. So every rigour, "force without stint," was not merely allowable but right. The banner of the ideal—unavoidably bloodstained—could still be waved aloft, and when the Peace was won, the world would be safe for a great new era of moral advance! The skill and courage with which these self-delusions about the origin, conduct and consequences of the war were fashioned in the press, how all through the monstrous proceedings at Versailles these journalists "kidded" themselves and their readers into believing it would all come out right—all this constitutes a record in the annals of unintelligent uplift. The clearest testimony to the moral degradation of such a mental debauch is found in the general

acquiescence of our nation in the starvation blockade of Germany, maintained for many months after the Armistice and in defiance of the plainest pledges of the Allies.

There is humour as well as tragedy in the collapse of Liberal Idealism, and Miss Cooper Willis brings a keen ridicule to bear upon the intellectual processes she diagnoses.

The book contributes a very necessary chapter to the history of the war, neglected hitherto by formal historians.

J. A. Hobson

Hampstead, May 1927

PREFACE

THE three little books making up this volume were originally published in England in 1919, 1920 and 1921, under the respective titles of "How We Went into the War," "How We Got on with the War" and "How We Came Out of the War." In republishing them, a few words of explanation are needed as to the newspaper material drawn upon for illustration.

In dealing with the political situation at the outbreak of war I quoted from the then most representative London morning newspapers, the Times, Daily Telegraph, Morning Post, Daily Mail *and* Daily News *and from the other two important organs of Liberal opinion, the* Manchester Guardian *(which though published in Manchester has a considerable London circulation) and the weekly* Nation. *I also quoted from* Punch, *the* Spectator, *and from* John Bull *which was then, under the editorship of Mr. Horatio Bottomley, the oracle in over a million lower class English households.*

These papers were not selected by me with any polemical motive; they were the papers to which with no thought in my head, at that time, of writing a book on the subject, I naturally turned to find out what people of different political views were thinking and to get samples of those different views.

It would have been impossible to continue drawing upon all these papers, Conservative and Independent as well as Liberal, weekly as well as daily, lower class as well as upper class, for illustrations of my study of Liberal idealism during the war. Considerations of space alone would have prevented this. The critical days of the outbreak were at most twelve or thirteen in number (July 22nd to August 3rd); the war lasted for over four years. But considerations of space were not the ruling ones, for, after the outbreak, I was concerned with one stream only of the great flood of war-feeling, the stream which bore the Liberals onward from rock to rock. As I have tried to show in the first book (Part I of this volume), it was from the conflict between the Liberals' pre-war attitude and the circumstances in which they found themselves when the war started, that the idea of the Holy War arose. The crusade, moreover, originated in the Liberal press, and though it was generally adopted (as was any idea that would stimulate hatred of Germany), the Liberal press, as the only begetter of the Gospel of War to end War, remained the only retailer of that Gospel's pure milk. I confined my attention therefore to the Liberals and to their most voluble and popular organ, and in dealing with the course of the war I took my extracts almost entirely from the Daily News *(the chief of the two London Liberal morning papers, the other being the* Daily Chronicle*) and from the articles, leading or otherwise, of the* Daily News' *then editor Mr. A. G. Gardiner, better known as A.G.G.*

The fact that Mr. Gardiner now writes for John Bull, *a paper no longer under the magnetic influence of Mr. Bottomley but a paper, nevertheless, whose posters do their best to*

suggest that the world is run on the lines of Drury Lane melodrama, must not be allowed to stand in the light of his, or the Daily News' *aforetime political reputation. The ways of journalists are hard—as hard, no doubt, for the journalist to pursue as for the educated person to understand. We are apt to forget that the first object of the journalist, as of the press, is to make money. To do that, a wide public must be secured and to secure that, sensational appeals and all that goes against the grain of fastidious thinking and feeling must be stomached. The downfall of Liberalism has not been without sad consequences to many of its leaders and followers. The mighty have indeed fallen but we must not forget that once they were mighty.*

Before the war and during the war, the Daily News *was a powerful influence among the Liberals. It was read at all the best Liberal breakfast tables and had no rival other than the* Manchester Guardian, *which, however, because it circulates primarily in the North of England and does not reach London until mid-day, was less of a rival than an ally. Though only a half-penny paper and therefore not as impressive in appearance as a Conservative penny daily, in manner of utterance it was as pontifical. I do not know what its circulation was in 1914; its circulation in 1926 was advertised in Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory as 600,000, but even if the 1914 figures were below this, that must not be allowed to depreciate the estimate of its importance. As Mr. Leonard Woolf pointed out, recently, in the* Nation *(Feb. 5, 1927) circulation figures are deceptive, in measuring the influence of a newspaper in periods before the rise of modern journalism. Accustomed as we are, nowadays, to figures that easily*

run to or go beyond a million, it is difficult to realise what enormous weight a weekly paper, such as the Fortnightly *had in the 'eighties, under the editorship of John Morley, with a circulation of only 2,500. Modern journalism with its "splash" headlines, "stunts" and pictures, started, of course, before the end of the 19th century (the* Daily Mail *arose in 1896) and in 1914 was well on its way to becoming the huge advertisement agency that it is today. But the paper shortage during the war and the rapid developments in the popular press that have taken place since in the way of appeals to every variety of popular taste, from offers of free insurance to puzzle competitions and baby-chat, justify our considering the pre-war and war period of modern journalism as distinct from the post-war and therefore not measuring the influence of the* Daily News *in that earlier period by a comparison between its circulation figures then and now.*

The popular press (meaning the half-penny dailies now a penny) of twelve or thirteen years ago, though not written for "the small, educated, influential class of the eighties" referred to by Mr. Woolf, was not so obviously addressed to the uneducated masses as it is today. Vulgar sensationalism was well to the fore in its pages but had not reached its present level, at any rate in the Daily News. *The tone throughout of that paper was still distinctive, if not distinguished (as I have good reason to know, having worked among its files for months in the newspaper room of the British Museum); the Liberal seasoning was not confined to the leading articles, and the majority of its readers were the army of the politically faithful. The leading articles themselves—and this is true, of course, of the leading articles in*

all papers—carried far more weight than they do now. They were read with respect, if not reverence; the flock looked to them and were fed.

Nowadays, the flock are less inclined to be shepherded. Political indifference and scepticism are more general than they were in 1914. Morning readers are apt to make straight for the serial story, the cross-word puzzle or the sporting news. We talk of the enormous influence of the press nowadays, and in the sense in which influence means far-reachingness, our remarks are true. But that which influences, by far-flung distribution, is, in the main, so vulgar, trivial and motley that "influential" in the old-fashioned, significant sense can scarcely be applied to it. The popular press of today is too representative of the thoughtless majority to be influential among the educated as it was in former days. Even during the war it was only representative of the educated because for the time being the educated had fallen to the level of the uneducated.

With the educated restored to a critical outlook, and with scepticism growing generally as regards the authoritativeness of the press (shown, for instance, by Mr. Lloyd George's recent remark, at a public dinner, that the most reliable parts of a newspaper are the advertisements) it may seem as if the idealistic thought and utterances discussed and quoted in this book, taken as they were entirely from the press which, intellectually, nowadays counts for so little, cannot have been truly representative of a great political party such as the Liberals were. Indeed, at moments I have felt this myself, in revising the books for republication, and, in a state of scepticism more advanced than that of the Knock-out-Blow Prime

Minister, I have sometimes wondered why I should ever have thought it worth while to bother about what the Liberal newspapers, or any newspapers, said. But then, in answer to that feeling and query, have come the unforgettable recollections that the great mass of Liberal opinion during the war was undoubtedly represented by the Daily News, *that Liberal statesmen, writers and speakers* did *say these things and were enthusiastically supported in saying them and moreover that they are still, though in a less passionate form, going on saying them or allowing them to be believed. For the Peace Treaty is still accepted in the main as a righteous settlement instead of being regarded, as it should be, as a mockery of Peace and the undeniable triumph of the Spirit of War. With those recollections has come also the conviction that unless a by no means sufficiently disillusioned world is reminded of its war delusions, in a future Great War, it will—I was going to say, slip into those same delusions again, but of course, whether reminded or not of its former delusions, it will slip into them if another Great War should occur. For War means delusion and more so in this age when, in peace-time, war is a monstrosity, and no humane person, or group of persons, can believe themselves or their country to have had a share in bringing war about. From this universal assumption of innocence, unquestioned as soon as war starts, arise all the conceptions of the enemy as the guilty party; then follows naturally, in the minds of sensitive and liberally inclined people, the immense myth of a Holy War. The logic of the feelings supplants the logic of fact and reason. Loss, risk, sacrifice, sacrifice, as Vernon Lee in her magnificent "Satan—the Waster" has pointed out, of all civilized man's*

repugnances no less than of his self and of those dear to him, consecrate and sanctify the cause. The greater the sacrifice, the holier the war, the more Satanic the enemy. Psychological necessities, many of them, such as the need for self-justification and self-respect, of a creditable kind, stand between us and Reality once we are IN *a war which we are keenly aware we did not want. Out of the hopes and fears, struggles and sufferings of war, out of its tremendous practical pressure and equally tremendous emotional stress, are born the passionate delusions and superstitions which, in times of war, constitute men's opinions and beliefs. Only non-participation can save a nation from these delusions. Warfare can no more be sane than humane. The idea, to which the Liberals so pathetically and grotesquely clung throughout the war, that the lusts of war could be directed into the paths of their war-aims, that the savage in war could be licked into shape and tamed into a morally inoffensive member of their crusade, was but the offspring of their own self-satisfied sentimentality. This idea is echoed in many disappointed idealists' criticism of the Peace Treaty as a betrayal brought about by some unexplainable miscarriage of their aims. There was, in fact, no betrayal. The Liberal war-aims, as I have tried to show in my Preface to Part II of this book, were stultified from the start. The outbreak of the war—not its conclusion—destroyed them. Liberalism was betrayed when Sir Edward Grey went* IN. *And Reason was betrayed when the Holy War was proclaimed, and those who proclaimed it were among the earliest casualties of the mental and spiritual havoc produced by the war. For war plays the devil not only with bodies but with minds, and the ensuing intellectual deteriora-*

tion of the warring nations, being less obvious than the physical deterioration, is by so much the more dangerous.

I. C. W.

London, March 1927

PART ONE

GOING INTO THE WAR

PREFACE TO PART ONE

AS FIRST PUBLISHED

THIS book, dealing with the origins of Liberal idealism during the war, was written some months before the prospect of finishing the story came into sight. Now that the war is over, an apology to the reader is necessary for publishing it without making it relevant to the end which has been reached. A second volume, How We Came Out of the War, is in preparation to amend that deficiency.

By some readers, the book will be, perhaps, understood as an indictment of Liberalism. It has been so understood by a few people who were good enough to read it before publication. I want therefore, in this preface, to correct, or rather to qualify, that impression.

It has been far from my intention to suggest that the state of mind which the book has tried to analyse is essentially Liberal, or that the intellectual processes which it discusses are particularly characteristic of Liberal thought. The book is not an indictment of Liberalism, taking Liberalism to mean the Liberal movement which has been occupied during the last century with the struggle for political, social, economic and religious freedom; it is an indictment only of the attitude of Liberals during this war. Indictment, however, is too strong a word, since it cannot justly be applied in dealing with unconscious self-deception, and to apply it where in the great majority of cases there has been no deliberate intellectual dishonesty, is to confuse two very different states of mind, namely, hypocrisy and self-delusion. There have been, and there are, no doubt, hypocritical Lib-

erals, men who, with their eyes wide open, deliberately adopted the attitude into which the rest of their fellow-Liberals unconsciously slipped. It is not likely that certain Liberal leaders, noted for their astuteness and power of detachment, should have forgotten their pre-war opinions and have fallen victims to the flood of humanitarian feeling which swept over the country at the time of the German invasion of Belgium. But such men were exceptions. In the case of the majority of Liberals, there was no hypocrisy; there was merely self-delusion, and as we study the self-delusion of Liberals at the outbreak of war, we realise that it arose, primarily, from the fact that at the outbreak of war, the Liberals were caught napping, and hurriedly awakening, found themselves in a most uncomfortable predicament. It was not Liberalism which determined their way out of the predicament, but the habit, common to all men, whatever their political opinions, of avoiding, instead of facing, difficulties which threaten their peace of mind; and taking the average Liberal as he is, the circumstances of the outbreak of war as they were, it is not surprising that the Liberals took the way of idealism. For the violation of Belgian neutrality made it very difficult for the Liberals to continue their opposition to the war, and, though in their pre-war mood they had been able to contemplate the possibility of that step being taken by Germany and to declare that, if it were taken, it would in no way oblige British intervention, they would have been less than Liberals had they been able to resist the impulse to intervene when that admittedly unjust step actually occurred.

The upbringing and tradition of Liberals must be remembered. Coming in the main from the Nonconformist element of society, they have been brought up upon humanitarian principles and taught to writhe at the very mention of cruelty and oppression. The historical circumstances of the uprising of the Liberal Party made for the inclusion of those whom Professor William James calls "tender-minded," and for the exclusion of the "tough-minded," more cynical individual. Nonconformists, Unitarians, descendants of

eighteenth century humanitarianism, idealists, these have predominated in the Liberal ranks; it is they who have upheld the Liberal creed, but it is also they who, by reason of those same temperamental qualities which made for their attraction to Liberalism, have sometimes dragged it down. Their political attitude, springing, as it has sprung, from a religious attitude, has tended to be one in which wishes are mistaken for horses and beliefs take the place of realities. This has been particularly noticeable in the average Liberal's semi-indifference to foreign policy in the pre-war period. That indifference was to a great extent temperamental and not altogether due to the overwhelming needs for social reform in which he was immersed. The conception of conflict between nations, on which foreign policy was based, was distasteful to him; he had no wish to acknowledge it. He was internationally minded; he believed in concord between nations, and so ardently that he did not question overmuch whether concord between nations actually existed. At the outbreak of war, few Liberals were students of foreign politics; fewer still knew about the Belgian treaty or realised that England had ever behaved or could dream of behaving as Germany was in the act of behaving towards Belgium. The Conservatives were much better informed, but in such matters they have always been ahead of the Liberals. The Liberal went into the war like an inexperienced district visitor who sets out, shrinkingly, to the slums to investigate tales of wife-beating, and Germany, like the rough husband whom the poor affrighted lady interviews, did not help the Liberals to report favourably upon their first acquaintance with wicked, cruel war. The evidence of wife-beating was so distressingly obvious that it passed unnoticed that slum life was full of the same kind of thing; it also passed unnoticed by the Liberals that there may have been French, or even British incitement to Belgian resistance which prevented Germany from behaving in a more exemplary way. There were atrocities, too—the newspapers were full of them, none fuller than the Liberal newspapers themselves, and the gloating over atrocities which has been more noticeable among Liberals

than among Conservatives is, in itself, evidence of that shrinking and inverted horror of the atrocious which the true Liberal has. Tough Militarists do not mind about atrocities, but they find them useful to make soft-hearted people's hair stand on end. Liberals *do care,* very rightly, —they care so much that they cannot bear to be kept in the dark concerning the merest rumour of brutality—and to all accounts of German atrocities they brought, not only the district visitor's tender-heartedness, but the gullibility of the anti-vivisectionist.

Now, only a barbarian, if one exists after four years' crusade against barbarism, would indict the Liberals for being influenced by those humanitarian motives which consciously inspired so much of their behaviour during this war, and, just as a study of the war from the point of view of every nation and of every party in every nation reveals good motives contributing as much as bad motives to the full catastrophic result, so a study of the so-called question of "origins" of the war reveals, so it seems to the writer, only the impossibility of affixing chief responsibility for the outbreak upon anyone. Behind each alleged cause, there is another cause, and behind that another, and these various causes are so inextricably entangled with the policies of all nations and of all parties in all nations, that it is impossible to point to any one nation, or any one party, as the sole originator. The wider and deeper our study, the wider and deeper is the meaning we are forced to give to the idea of responsibility, and the honest critic, while he arraigns those whose policies seem to have made directly for war, cannot stop short in arraignment before those whose temperamental aversion to knowledge of those policies contributed also, though indirectly, to the outbreak. He sees responsibility existing in inertia as well as in activity—he sees it in unconscious self-deception as well as in deliberate intent. And when he sees it in unconscious self-deception, he is most troubled, because of the vastness of the struggle ahead, which that sight opens up to him, before the world can be made safe for democracy, or, as a serious joker has put it, before

democracy can be made safe for the world. Because, too, of the completely different nature of the struggle; its stage, its weapons, the very attitude of the fighter, being altogether strange and new. The fighter must fight it out with no outside enemy but with himself; lonely, unexhilarated by the company of others, coldly comforted, even when he is victorious, by Reason, for whose sake he fights. He must fight for self-possession, for mental integrity, forswearing the temptation to exchange self-scrutiny and self-reproach for the easier and more pleasant experience of setting his neighbours to rights. He must realise that the monstrous, flesh and blood, thewed and sinewed ruffian, his enemy, is of the same species as the skeleton in his own cupboard; he must learn that his crusades, like his charity, to be successful, should begin at home. "This is not a war of peoples, or even of despots and diplomatists," the A.G.G. of the future must say. "We have no quarrel with other people; our quarrel is with the unreasonable elements within ourselves. Being in that quarrel, we—the reasonable part of us, must win. *Then* the world will be free."

I. C. W.

November 11, 1918

GOING INTO THE WAR

1

PRE-WAR FEELING

NOTHING in connection with the outbreak of war is more worthy of study, though nothing is now more difficult to remember, than the state of public opinion in this country up to the eve of the declaration of war upon Germany. When the Austro-Servian dispute first came into the notice of the public there was very little attention to spare for it. It could not compete with the Irish crisis and all the excitement that centred round gun-running in Ulster and the Buckingham Palace Conference. Far deeper anxieties weighed upon us than the growing Austro-Servian tension and even without those anxieties there were few people who cared, one way or the other, what happened in the Balkans. The Balkan nations were regarded as incorrigible fighters, and their various wars were beyond the comprehension and interest of the average Englishman. Better informed people knew vaguely that an Austro-Russian conflict loomed behind the shuffling scenes of Balkan unrest—*Punch's* cartoon on July 29, "The Power Behind,"[1] is a good picture of the "intelligent" British view of the background of the situation

[1] The Austrian eagle about to pounce upon a bantam cock (Servia), whose defiance in face of such danger is explained by the presence of the Russian bear in hiding behind a mound. Below the cartoon is written: Austria (at the ultimatum stage): "I don't quite like his attitude. Somebody must be backing him."

—but British interests were not involved in that part of the world and there was nothing, so far as we knew, to make us concerned to choose between Austrian and Russian hegemony there.

The immediate dispute was one in which, as *Truth* remarked, "we had no more concern than in a quarrel among the inhabitants of Saturn." We had no difference with Austria; we had often fought on her side in the past, against France. As for Servia, there was not a country in Europe with which we had fewer ties, moral as well as material. All we knew about Servia was not to her credit; she had murdered her King and his Consort, and now that she had assassinated an Archduke there was a general feeling that she deserved some punishment. Nevertheless, we were not disposed to be deeply indignant about her misdeeds, which did not surprise our notions of Balkan manners, and most people agreed with *John Bull's* cry: "To Hell with Servia," only because they were beginning to be afraid that England might really have to go to hell with that then uncanonised little country.

The fear came out of no sudden gush of sympathy with Servia, but was aroused by the views as to Great Britain's position which were put forward, from July 25 onwards, by the *Times* and Conservative press. At first, despite these papers' clear pronouncement that our intervention was inevitable if war broke out on the continent, people saw the prospect of being involved merely as a disagreeable possibility, and not as an inevitability. This was partly because there was still the hope that the dispute would be settled without war, which hope naturally imparted uncertainty to every aspect of the situation, and also because a vehement protest against the *Times'* attitude was carried on by the Liberal papers. But inability to realise the full gravity of the situation sprang not only from this general uncertainty and controversy as to our diplomatic position, but had its roots in the almost complete indifference which prevailed both as regards the merits of the immediate dispute and the deeper Slav-Teuton conflict beneath. No one thought Servia innocent, but, on the other hand, no one could understand why, after the Servian con-

cessions, Austria should still be bent upon demands which could only be pressed at the risk of European war. Our very detachment in Balkan matters made it impossible for us to understand why Vienna and Berlin should be less occupied with that risk than with maintaining that the quarrel was one which concerned the immediate principles alone. The quarrel was such a remote one; we had so little sense of what was at stake between Austria and Russia. This aspect of the situation conflicted almost grotesquely with that other aspect, in process of development, with its sinister indications that actually our detachment was unreal and that, despite our feelings and wishes, we were involved. The irony of the situation, as it struck the man in the street, was well expressed by Owen Seaman in *Punch* of August 5, in the following verses:

THE LOGIC OF ENTENTES

Lines composed on what looks like the eve of a general European war, and designed to represent the views of an average British patriot.

TO SERVIA:

"You have won whatever of fame it brings
To have murdered a king and the heir of kings,
And it well may be that your sovereign pride
Chafes at a touch of its tender hide;
But why should I follow your fighting line,
For a matter that's no concern of mine?

TO AUSTRIA:

"You may, if you like, elect to curb
The dark designs of the dubious Serb
And to close your Emperor's days in strife,
A tragic end to a tragic life,
By your bellicose taste for Balkan coups.
But why in the world should I stand to lose?

TO RUSSIA:

"No doubt the natural course for you
Is to bid the Austrian bird 'Go to'!
He can't be suffered to spoil your dream
Of a beautiful Pan-Slavonic scheme:
But Britons can never be Slavs, you see,
So what has your case to do with me?

"But since another if you insist
Will be cutting in with his mailed fist
I shall be asked to a general scrap
All over the European map,
Dragged into somebody else's war
For that's what a double Entente is for.

"Well, if I must, I shall have to fight
For the love of a bounding Balkanite,
But O what a tactless choice of time
When the bathing season is at its prime,
And how I should hate to lose my chance
Of wallowing off the coast of France."

In the same issue of *Punch* A.A.M.'s "Armageddon" reflected a more thoughtful view. No more telling satire upon the way in which, under the existing international system, the ridiculous is transformed into the sublime and the insignificant is made momentous has been written. In this brilliant article the amount of the plain man, "Mr. Porkins'" share in bringing about the catastrophe is exactly conveyed by making his remark, once so familiar in club smoking-rooms, "What England wants is a war—we're getting flabby," overheard in Olympus where, "it is well understood, Porkins must not be disappointed." The gods get to work, and the match is found to light the blaze "in the little village of Ospovat which is in the south-east corner of Ruritania." There lives a maiden, Maria Strultz, engaged to marry Captain Tomsk, who commands a frontier fort on the borders of Ruritania and Essenland, and whose chief amusement in a

dull life is to play cards with the Essen captain who commands the frontier fort on the other side. Maria is made to jilt the captain who, resorting to the usual consolation of rejected lovers in melodrama, is hazily convinced by the end of the evening that it is the Essen captain who has jilted Maria! "Whereupon he rowed across the river and poured his revolver into the Essenland flag." The gods must have helped him to shoot straight.

" 'Now we're off,' said the gods in Olympus."

The gods knew their men. In Diedeldorf, the capital of Essenland, the leader writers began to remove their coats. "The blood of every true Essenlander" was taken, not in vain, by their fluent pens. It boiled at command and ultimatums rushed to and fro.

" 'Aren't they wonderful?' said the gods in Olympus to one another."

But there was one young god unused to men's wonderful ways. He couldn't quite see what all this had to do with England. " 'Porkins lives in England, not Essenland,' " he said, doubtfully.

" 'Wait a moment,' said the others."

The others were right. For, in the capital of Borovia, the leader writer of the *Borovian Patriot* was not idle.

" 'How does Borovia stand?' he asked. 'If Essenland occupies Ruritania, can any thinking man in Borovia feel safe? . . . It is vital to the prestige of Borovia that the integrity of Ruritania should be preserved. Otherwise we may resign ourselves at once to the prospect of becoming a fifth rate Power in the eyes of Europe. . . .' "

" 'And there you are!' said the gods in Olympus."

" 'But even now . . .' began the very young god."

" 'Silly, isn't Felicia the ally of Essenland, isn't Marksland the ally of Borovia, isn't England the ally of the ally of the ally of the country which holds the balance of power between Marksland and Felicia?' "

" 'But if any of them thought the whole thing stupid or unjust or——' "

"'Their prestige,' said the gods, gravely, trying not to laugh."

"'Oh, I see,' said the very young god."

The date of this issue of *Punch* seems out of keeping with the tone of these contributions. August 5? Surely that was the day *after* the declaration of war. For a moment one wonders if *Punch's* clock could have stopped going. One remembers the crowd in the Strand on the night of August 4 and other manifestations of patriotic feeling which "The Logic of Ententes" and "Armageddon" are far from reflecting.

What could have happened to *Punch?* A voice, perhaps from Olympus, reminds us: "Silly, isn't *Punch* a weekly paper, isn't it nearly always the case that on the day after a weekly paper goes to print something happens to take the wind out of its forecasts and to make its contents flat? Look at the next issue of *Punch,* to see what really happened on August 5." We look at *Punch* of August 12. Yes, the clock is going all right. Under "The Essence of Parliament" we read:

August 5. "Premier's announcement that 'since eleven o'clock last night a state of war had existed between Germany and ourselves' hailed with deep-throated cheer. Its volume nothing compared with that which burst forth when he concluded the statement with a casual remark that to-morrow he will move a Vote of Credit for one hundred millions. Had he mentioned the sum as an instalment paid in advance by Germany on account of war indemnity the House couldn't have been more jubilant."

What is that we hear above the deep-throated cheer of the Commons? Is it Mr. Porkins in the club smoking-room wishing that he were "twenty years younger"? Or is it the last murmur of doubt being quelled in Olympus?

"'Oh I see!' said the very young god."

Yet, outside the House of Commons and the bank holiday crowd who greeted the declaration of war and demonstrated their patriotism in front of Buckingham Palace on the night of August 4, there was no jubilation. There was

more tension than excitement during the last two days of peace in London; one remembers how, on that fateful Monday, the holiday makers drifted about Parliament Square and Downing Street, scanning the latest newspaper posters and watching for a sight of Ministers. Attention was focussed upon the question of whether we should have to "go in," and not upon the possible enemy. Not until Sir Edward Grey's speech in the afternoon, relieving that suspense, was the focus shifted to Germany. For the few remaining hours of Monday people waited, but no longer in uncertainty, only to hear of the actual declaration of war. We were bound to go in—people told one another—there was no help for it; we had got to stand by France even if Germany didn't violate Belgian neutrality. That question only clinched the matter and our ultimatum would show Germany that we meant business. We didn't want to fight but, by jingo, this was the kind of thing we couldn't take lying down. It was some satisfaction to know that it wouldn't make much difference to us materially whether we went in or stayed out. Sir Edward Grey had said that.[2] And morally, of course, our position after the war wouldn't be worth sixpence if we deserted France; we should be without a friend in Europe if we left her in the lurch.

Fortunately for our peace of mind we were spared the embarrassment of a conflict between moral and material claims. The gods, who undoubtedly had a warm corner in their hearts for Mr. Porkins, saw to it that in the war which he and England wanted to save her from flabbiness, she had right as well as interest on her side. So we went into the war with a clear conscience, while Germany went into it as best she could.

[2] For a brief scrutiny of Sir E. Grey's statement the reader is referred to Professor H. E. Barnes' book "The Genesis of the World War," (A. A. Knopf) p. 527, under the heading "What Grey's Folly Cost England."

2

THE LEADER WRITERS

IT WAS not the fault of the *Times* and its supporters that people did not realise the seriousness of the Balkan dispute sooner than they did. From the moment of the Austrian ultimatum to Servia (July 24) the Conservative papers did their best to bring the gravity of the situation home to their readers and to remove all doubt as to Great Britain's position. As early as July 22 the *Times* had a leader, "A Danger to Europe," describing the growing tension between Austria and Servia as "having created a situation in European politics too serious to be ignored, even among the deep anxieties which weigh upon us at home," and alive to the risks of an explosion, "if it is true that Austria-Hungary is determined to make this an occasion for the settlement of Balkan questions." The deep anxieties at home were, of course, concerning the Irish crisis, which was then in the most acute stage of discussion and to which all newspapers were devoting headlines in which "The Crisis" and "Civil War" were prominent. On July 25, the day after the dispatch of the Austrian ultimatum, the *Times* hardly knew which way to turn for the dangers, continental and domestic, which loomed ahead. The Home Rule Conference had broken down; there must, the *Times* declared, be a general election. On the other hand, "England cannot suffer the fresh burden which the failure of the Home Rule Conference casts upon her to divert her attention from the grave crisis that has arisen in Europe within the last thirty-six hours." It earnestly hoped that Austria-Hungary had not spoken the last word in the Note to Servia, to which she required a reply that night (July 25). Because if she had we "stood

upon the edge of war and of a war fraught with dangers that are incalculable to all the Great Powers." The *Times* could not share the confidence which, it said, was felt or affected in Berlin that a conflict between Austria-Hungary and Servia would be localised. The news from St. Petersburg, it thought, was an ominous comment upon such an assumption. Calculations, it remarked, were being made in certain quarters upon the effect which domestic troubles of Russia, France and England might have upon their attitude. The *Times* thought such calculations "exceedingly dangerous." "The danger of a conflagration is very serious to all the Powers."

On July 27 (Monday) came the news of the gun-running coup of the National Volunteers and of fighting in Ireland. Nevertheless the *Times'* first leader was upon the European crisis and the Servian reply to the Austrian Note. It was satisfied with that reply and urged Austria to be satisfied too. Surely, it said, the Emperor Francis Joseph wasn't going to jeopardise the safety of his Empire and the tranquillity of Europe because he hadn't got everything he wanted. He was getting unheard-of concessions from a sovereign state. It was all very well for Germany to say that it was a struggle which concerned the immediate principals alone. That wasn't true. It almost looked to the *Times* as if this view were being put forward to test the solidarity of the Entente, like other attempts which had been made in the past, but the *Times* added warningly, "without success." "Of course, we were working and should work for peace. *But should there arise in any quarter a desire to test our adhesion to the principles that inform our friendships and that thereby guarantee the balance of power in Europe, we shall be found no less ready to vindicate them with the whole strength of the Empire than we have been found ready whenever they have been tried in the past. That, we conceive, interest, duty and honour demand from us. England will not hesitate to answer to their call.*"

The next day, July 28, the House of Commons met, according to the *Times'* Parliamentary correspondent, "in a

mood of deep anxiety." "Issues of the first magnitude, national and international, had arisen since its last meeting and all parties were impatient to hear statements from the Government on the unhappy events in Dublin and on the European crisis. The House was highly charged with emotion and its feelings underwent extraordinarily rapid changes as it approached one crisis or the other. It was riven by party passion while the Dublin affair was under consideration; when a moment later Sir E. Grey explained the steps which Great Britain was taking to avert a European war it became instantly calm, grave and united in purpose. The contrast was a remarkable manifestation of the essential spirit of British politics."

The *Times'* leader said: "Sir Edward Grey's words must bring the gravity of the situation home to all. . . . It must be obvious to all that the moment the dispute ceases to be one between Austria-Hungary and Servia and involves another Great Power it can but end in the greatest catastrophe that has ever befallen the Continent of Europe at one blow; no one can say what would be the limit of the issues that might be raised by such a conflict; the consequences, direct and indirect, would be incalculable."

On the 29th, Austria's declaration of war upon Servia was published. Close the ranks, cried the *Times* immediately, domestic differences must be patched up in order that the whole nation may present a united front. A general election at such a juncture was out of the question, there must be a truce at home. The peace of Europe hung by a thread, it declared in its leader, "The Efforts for Peace." There was, it said, reason to believe that in the most exalted quarters in Germany peace was warmly and honestly desired, but it was only too probable that pressure from all manner of influential personages and groups was being exerted to overcome the pacific leanings of the Emperor. It was, it said, with no frivolous feeling that the Government and people of England looked abroad. They well knew what a European war would mean to the whole world. But they knew too that the surest way and perhaps the only way to preserve the peace

for which they longed was to make it clear to all that if their friends were forced into war England would support them to the full. We had no selfish interests to serve, no direct interests at all except wanting to see elementary fair play between Vienna and Belgrade. But, remember, at the time of the Algeciras dispute we had very little direct interest, and none at all at Agadir. Still, look what happened then! "We were ready on both of those occasions to give our friends all the support at our command in the vindication of their rightful claims." Why? "*Because,*" said the *Times,* "*it is our settled interest and traditional policy to uphold the balance of power in Europe.*" That was why we had gone into the Entente with France, and afterwards into the Entente with Russia, and that was why we should be faithful to the Entente, come what might. It was to be hoped that our fidelity would not be tried by the most terrible of all tests, and, of course, we were going to spare no pains and refrain from no exertions to keep the peace. But, should these efforts prove vain, "*England will be found as ready to stand by her friends to-day as ever she was to stand by them when she was aiding Europe to fling off the despotism of Napoleon.*"

These warnings were repeated on the following days in two leaders, "Lowering Clouds" (July 30) and "Waning Hopes" (July 31). In the first, after reserving for the Government and the nation "the most complete liberty of action," the *Times* declared: "If France is menaced, or the safety of the Belgian frontier, which we have guaranteed with her and with Prussia . . . we shall know how to act. We can no more afford to see France crushed by Prussia and the balance of power upset against France than Germany can afford to see Austria-Hungary crushed by Russia and that balance upset against Austrian and Hungarian interests. Upon that issue, should it become an issue to be decided by arms, our friends and our enemies will find that we think and act with one accord. We know . . . that when we strike for the vital interests of the Crown and of the nation we must strike as one man. That it was that gave us the victory against the world

in arms; that it is, we feel and know, which will give us the victory again if we are forced into the field."

"Waning Hopes" expounded the identity of friendship and interest. Alongside the leader was an article setting forth the two claims and emphasising their indissolubility. We were bound by "moral" obligations to side with France and Russia lest the balance of forces on the Continent should be upset to our disadvantage and we should be left alone to face a predominant Germany. The prospect of this was illustrated by consideration of how a German advance through Belgium and the occupation of northern France would threaten our national existence. It would not do for such a threat to become actual. We must strike at once. "It is not merely a duty of friendship," urged the leader, "it is an elementary duty of self-preservation. It is consideration for our own welfare and our own security." "Were we to show weakness and pusillanimity now, none would trust us again." "We should be hated by the friends we had abandoned and despised by the rivals before whose threats we had flinched." . . . "We shall still work on for peace," concluded the *Times*, "work on for it to the very end. . . . but the hour has come when we may have to make instant preparations for war. The angel of death is abroad. We may almost hear the beating of his wings. He may yet spare us and pass on. But if he indeed visits those with whom we stand we must pay our share of the fell tribute with stout hearts."

The *Daily Mail* was even more definite than the *Times*. On July 25 it stated that if the conflict could not be localised, the Triple Entente would find itself face to face with the Triple Alliance. It forthwith proceeded to set out the *dramatis personæ* of the situation in the way familiar to readers of its feuilletons as follows:

TRIPLE ALLIANCE.	TRIPLE ENTENTE.
Germany.	Great Britain.
Austria.	France.
Italy.	Russia.

THE BALKANS

GREECE: Ally of Servia.

MONTENEGRO: Ally of Servia. Slav Country. Reported to be ready to side with Servia.

RUMANIA: Most powerful Balkan State. Friendly with Servia and closely united with Russia.

BULGARIA: Defeated by Servia and Greece in second Balkan war. Still smarting under the defeat.

TURKEY: Dreaming of recovering territory lost in Balkan wars.

On July 26 its leading article concluded with the words: "It is necessary to make it clear that any attempt against the Entente will be met with absolute and decided firmness not by Russia and France alone, but by Great Britain also," and from that date onwards it was employed in adding a further chapter to the powerful serial story, "The Mailed Fist," with whose earlier stages its readers were already acquainted. On August 3, under the heading "The Mailed Fist Strikes," it wrote: "Germany has declared war upon Russia and has begun war without declaration upon France . . . she herself is now plainly revealed as the aggressor." Europe, it went almost without saying, had been a Paradise of peace until the Prussian disturbed its repose. But now! "A new twilight of the gods is upon the world in which force reigns alone. The era of peace and respect for treaties has passed. Europe is entering upon an age of violence and conflict. . . . In the immediate past, Germany has compelled every important country in Europe to arm and prepare for war by constantly increasing the size of her armies and fleets. Now this rising Power, with its perfect organisation and its array of armed men, has decided that the moment has come to put everything in Europe to the test, and above all, to try the moral and material strength of Great Britain. . . . Where peoples are not ready to defend themselves they will be trampled underfoot. Their wealth will be taken from them; their independence destroyed. . . . This is the beginning of a new order of affairs in which every nation will have to battle

for its existence and to conquer its position afresh at the cannon's mouth. It is the end of an epoch. . . . Thus the grim story of the war begins with German machinations and intrigues, the object of which is to overthrow the Triple Entente, humiliate Great Britain, and tear up the map of Europe. . . . Europe might have been spared all this if Great Britain had only armed."

The *Morning Post's* argument during the pre-war period was in practical agreement with that of the *Times*. There was, as there always is, a difference in spirit between the two papers. The *Morning Post* does not go outside material considerations for bush for its political wine. Material considerations afford it all the conviction it needs that the policy it advocates is sound. Its case for British intervention in the European war was stated in the most outspoken and unambiguous way from the beginning of the crisis.

"If the word mobilisation is pronounced in St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Paris, it will have to be pronounced in London also," it said on July 27. "Engagements, written or unwritten, formal or moral, have been made which cannot now be evaded, and which probably there will be no wish to evade. Many people in this country who pay little attention to foreign affairs appear to regard the whole business as merely continental. There could not be a greater mistake. . . . The question at issue is whether there is to be a European war in which all the great Powers, including England, will be engaged." Finally, on August 3, it announced "Our Clear Duty": "England is not going to war to save Servia from destruction . . . she is driven into war by Germany's attack upon France."

The *Spectator* may also be studied for the view that Balance of Power considerations obliged us to intervene. On August 1, it commended the Government for doing "the right thing in the right way," *i.e.*, "they have done their very best to stop the war or to minimise its effect, but at the same time, and with a minimum of provocative action, they have clearly indicated that we do not mean to play a selfish or a narrow part. If the worst comes to the worst we shall

stand loyally by our friends and our virtual engagements—a policy dictated alike by honour and self-interest. . . . If we are forced into war, it will be no half-hearted effort upon our part, but war waged by land and sea with the utmost vigour, and also with that careful but determined initiative which is the secret of military success. Owing to the great review preliminary to the naval manœuvres, practically our whole fleet is mobilised. We do not doubt that if a Russian land mobilisation is followed by a German mobilisation, and that, again, by a French mobilisation, our Reserves will also be called out and the Territorial Force embodied, and, further, that an Expeditionary Force will be equipped and sent to North-Eastern France to co-operate with the French Field Army. . . . If the great struggle is to come no man can predict its result, but at least we can feel in this country that we have done nothing to provoke the strife, and that we shall be fighting in self-preservation and fighting with honour and honesty. We can also feel, though we do not care to dwell upon such a point, that as far as we are concerned, the moment is favourable. The Fleet actually mobilised, is, we believe, capable of fulfilling all the requirements of the nation. It never was in better heart. The Army is sound and well-equipped, if small. It is, indeed, not too much to say that for quality, both of officers and men, it is now the best in the world. The harvest which is being reaped, is a very bountiful one, and thus if war comes it will find us with our food supplies at the maximum."[1]

The national interests involved in our obligations were gone into at length in a leading article, entitled "Britain's Duty." After declaring that the British people were going to maintain the pledges which they had given to others by deed, if not by actual word—"they are going to do what they have openly and clearly allowed others to expect they will do."—the *Spectator* went on to urge that though duty was a sufficient consideration, it was not immaterial to remember that even if we were in no way bound in conscience

[1] This was, of course, before the cry "We were not ready" had become popular.

and honour to stand by France and Russia, we ought to stand by them merely from motives of self-interest. "A war involving France and Russia in which we did not participate would bring on us greater perils than would participation in a war on the side of France and Russia, even though the latter war required us to put forth our whole strength and stake our all in ships, men, and money. France and Russia might be beaten without our help and Germany and her satellite Powers become masters of Europe." If England were to stand out and say that a Russo-Austrian quarrel over Servia had nothing to do with her, the result would be "intense bitterness on the part of Russia and France who, whether they actually had warrant for such feelings or not, would consider themselves betrayed." The danger was that after a while Germany would propose to all the European Powers to unite with her and "join together to strike down the rapacious tyrant of the seas and divide among us the inheritance she has misused." . . . "If Russia takes India, if Germany and France divide Africa between them, and if the rest of the Colonial possessions of Britain are also fairly partitioned, everybody will have room for expansion. . . . There is plenty for all in the British Empire." But, even if Russia and France did not take this "German bait," the danger was that they would both in the end be beaten by Germany, and then Germany would turn upon Britain and say Britain must give up the command of the sea and "enter into the German European system." "Thus either by an arrangement between the Powers or by a victory of the Triple Alliance, Britain must be placed at a tremendous disadvantage." But perhaps it might be said that Russia and France might, after all, win even without Britain's help. The *Spectator* dismissed that idea: "Let those who use this argument reflect upon its folly. If we are going to rely upon the chance of Germany and Austria being beaten, is it not madness not to make that chance a certainty by fighting on the side which we not only want to see victorious, but which must win if we are to be safe? The truth is that neither from the point of view of honour and good faith, nor from that of

national safety is it possible for us to stand out of war if war comes.'' In short, to the *Spectator,* the occasion was a good one for getting rid once and for all of the German menace. *John Bull* put the case with more boldness and gusto in declaring that the policy of a Business Government would be to ''egg on'' the Kaiser to the assistance of his Austrian ally in order that we might have the struggle over and have done with it. This business-like advice appeared in the famous ''To Hell with Servia'' article. (*John Bull,* August 8, 1914.) That article should be read in full to appreciate the blend of sturdy independence, rollicking patriotism and blithe, if not subtle, opportunism which made up the individuality of Mr. Bottomley's paper. All these qualities, particularly the last mentioned, are well seen in the following extracts from the article in question.

''It is with no very conceited sense of satisfaction but rather in the interests of historical accuracy that we put on record that it was our recent disclosure of the secret cypher letter written from the Servian Legation in London, and containing the exact financial terms for the 'elimination' of the Archduke of Austria which led to the ultimatum to Servia. We see no reason whatever why the peace of Europe should be imperilled by Austria's just demands, and we wish the old Emperor the satisfaction of seeing, ere his long reign comes to an end, the 'elimination' of the Servian nation. At any rate we most solemnly protest against the shedding of a single drop of English blood to save these people from the Nemesis which threatens to overtake them. . . . The foul murders of the Archduke and Archduchess of Austria by a Servian assassin in the pay of Belgrade plotters, encouraged and supported by the press and people of the country, have at last precipitated a just vengeance, and as an alternative to extinction by the Austrian sword the Servians are rightly subjected to such a humiliation of atonement as has seldom been inflicted on a nation; and we would not lift a finger to write a word to save them. We repeat what we said a few weeks ago—*Servia must be wiped out.* Let Servia be removed from the map of Europe!''

"We are no servile supporters of the Ministry or of Sir Edward Grey. Both he and the whole Government may, however, in this crisis, rely upon our patriotism and our unbroken support in regard to any policy which, on behalf of the country, they may decide to adopt. 'Great Britain—right or wrong'—will always be our motto in times of war. Nevertheless, it has been a bad policy of entering into continental alliances and understandings which has placed us in this difficulty. . . . We heartily endorse the view of our distinguished contemporary, *Truth,* that it is scandalous that, owing to the circumlocutionary workings of our Entente with France we should have to face coming into conflict with our old friends, the Austrian Empire, of drawing the sword against our old comrade, Italy, and, above all, of risking our blood and treasure for the benefit of Servia."

"We do not, of course, know what may be the European situation by the time these lines are read. We have no hesitation, however, in saying what, in existing circumstances, would be the policy of a Business Government. It would undoubtedly avail itself of the crisis to get rid, once and for all, of the German menace. Its diplomacy would be directed to egging on the Kaiser to the assistance of his Austrian ally and to inducing France to stand by with Great Britain until the German Empire had spent itself sufficiently to render it amenable, by which we mean to enter into such compacts with both France and England as would, on the one hand, secure peace to our neighbour for all time to come, and on the other a cessation of the impudent and unwarrantable naval rivalry between Germany and ourselves. These, however, are matters which it is idle to press at the present time. We can only hope for the best whilst preparing for the worst, and, sinking every thought but for the safety, honour, and glory of our Empire, exclaim whatever be the outset of the crisis: 'To Hell with Servia!'"

. . . . . .

"Just as we are going to press we receive the grave

news that the great European Powers have drawn the sword. We are thus entering upon a war, the course and ultimate results of which no one can foresee. It will be remembered that, both on the platform and in the columns of this journal, we have for years past warned the Government and the country of the danger of neglecting the opportunity—which would have been promptly seized by an administration of business men—of demanding of Germany the cessation of her gigantic shipbuilding programme which could be designed only to wrest from us the supremacy of the sea. We unhesitatingly expressed our view that, failing a satisfactory assurance of modification in the plans of our Teutonic rival, the only course of far-seeing, patriotic statesmen would be to annihilate the German fleet at once and place it out of her power ever again to threaten our national existence. Would that our words had fallen upon more attentive ears! We know that our readers—typical, patriotic Britishers—will echo with us the heroic lines of our National Bard:—

'Come the three corners of the world in arms, etc.'

Once more 'To Hell with Servia!'

'God Save the King!'

The next issue of *John Bull* was exuberant in its rejoicing that the *Day of Britain's greatest glory* had dawned. "This is the war which we have been predicting for the past five years . . . our prophecies have come true—indeed, as we show elsewhere they are almost uncanny in their precision and accuracy." Under the heading, "The Voice in the Wilderness that was heard at last," was arrayed a collection of these uncanny prophecies, consisting of extracts from Mr. Bottomley's election addresses, speeches, and other warnings published from time to time in *John Bull*. The collection was prefaced by the following editorial remarks: "Alone among journalists, alone among public men, have we been warning the nation during the past five years of what was coming, and as will be seen from the following pages, we have been deadly correct in our information. As stated elsewhere[2] we do not repro-

[2] The reference is to another sentence: "God knows that it is with no false sense of pride that to-day we see the fulfilment of our predictions."

duce our words in any sense of conceit. Our motive is a far different one. We want, at this crucial time, to impress upon the public mind that we, at any rate, are, and always have been, alive to the true reading of the signs and portents which indicate the destiny of our race."

"Yes, the Day has dawned!" proclaimed the leading article. "Men look in each other's eyes and ask: 'Is it really true? Has the Day actually arrived?' . . . And many add, 'Then *John Bull was* right!'

. . . . . .

"The Day has dawned. The armed forces of Great Britain and Germany are moving towards the crisis of a conflict, which was as inevitably predestined as the process of the suns. At such a moment it behooves the craftsman of the pen to comport himself humbly, disdaining for the nonce the trickery of rhetoric and the artistry of words. . . . What we have to say must be said bluntly."

. . . . . .

"We still hold that the blood-guiltiness of Servia has robbed her of all claim upon the sympathies of Europe; and had it been possible to confine the issues . . . we should still have contended that the intervention of Great Britain was wholly unjustified, if not, indeed, tantamount to the aiding and abetting of crime. 'To Hell with Servia' we cried last week, and 'To Hell with Servia' we repeat with no less fervour to-day. But in the immensity of the later crisis, the murders of Sarajevo and the murderers of Belgrade have faded into the background. To recall them to-day would be to confuse the issues of the mighty conflict which has been thrust upon us. Nor should we be better employed in discoursing of moral obligations to our continental friends. Considerations of this sort have doubtless played their part in the counsels of the Government, but they have not been the decisive factor in the situation. . . . It is not for the love of France, nor for the behoof of Russia that we are at death grips with Germany. . . . Our blood and treasure will be spent, not for the mere readjustment of European boundaries or the main-

tenance of a somewhat illusory 'Balance of Power,' but in order that the mightiest of mundane issues may for ever be set at rest."

. . . . . .

"There can be only one result. This we say in no spirit of braggadocio, but because the alternative is unthinkable. We are fighting not for shadowy political advantages, not for lust of power, not for the hegemony of Europe, but for our very existence as an independent nation. In this consciousness we shall fight to the death, for compromise would be tantamount to surrender. We shall neither ask nor accept quarter. Germany has chosen her time and she must abide the consequences. It were unchivalrous to belittle her resources or to question the bravery of her sons. We make no mistake as to the magnitude of the task before us. With a full consciousness of the import of our words we say quite simply that the German Fleet must be swept from the face of the seas. Her pretensions to the mastery of the waves must be buried ocean deep. No false notions of humanity or of economy must be permitted to hinder the work of destruction. It is not we who have drawn the sword, but it shall be sheathed again at our good pleasure. From the close of this war Germany shall use the waterways of the world by the courtesy of Britain. On every sea her pennons shall dip to the Union Jack."

In short, "disdaining for the nonce the artistry of words," Germany was to be "wiped out." The craftsman of the pen had comported himself too humbly in the previous week's issue. "Servia must be wiped out—let Servia be removed from the map of Europe!" had then been his modest demand. The explanation of this, *John Bull* told a correspondent in the "Letter Bag" of August 15,[3] was that "it was written before Germany had challenged France and England and when the only issue involved was the quarrel between Austria and Servia. It seemed too good to hope that the Kaiser was prepared to take us all on at once. Otherwise, of course, the poster would have been 'To Hell with Germany!' "

[3] "John Bull's" Letter Bag, C.O.M. (Hendon).

This slight slip in prophetic insight was soon rectified. Not a vestige of the German Empire was left after the craftsman of the pen had exercised his artistry upon the theme of "Never Again" in the following week's issue (August 22): "As regards Germany herself, we repeat, she must be wiped off the map of Europe. Her colonies must be taken over by either France or ourselves or both of us, and whatever ships she has left must be added in equal proportions to the French and British navies. Russia, of course, must be treated fairly, but a cash indemnity would suit her best, so her claims must be added to the indemnity which we shall demand in solid gold." It was, perhaps, the thought of the solid cash indemnity which coloured the vision of the Golden Eventide in the following passage:

"Let every Briton look with calm confidence and firm resolve to the Golden Eventide when the sounds of battle shall be silenced and, with the women and children, we will foregather to talk of the victory, of our dear, lost comrades and the newborn world, in which at last the Prince of Peace shall be the King."

* * * * * * * *

Of all the Conservative papers the *Daily Telegraph* took the most impartial view of the Balkan crisis. It was no doubt influenced by the despatches of Dr. Dillon, its correspondent in Vienna. It saw from the outset that the underlying ground was the "inveterate antagonism between the Teutonic and Slavonic races," and it was emphatic in pointing out that the outcome of the crisis hinged upon Russia's action. "The real pivot of the situation lies primarily in St. Petersburg, and only in a secondary degree in Berlin," it said on July 27. "The question which tortures the imagination of diplomatists is what precisely Russia intends to do. . . . If Russia moves, then it is only too likely that Germany will move, and if Germany moves, then comes the appalling possibility that France might think it to her advantage to throw in her lot with her ally." "Considerations of this kind prove how delicate and difficult the diplomatic action of the Triple Entente will be with regard to the crisis. Great Britain is

by no means necessarily involved in the present Balkan trouble, but circumstances might easily arrive in which her sympathy with the two other partners of the Triple Entente might suggest the necessity of some kind of action. In this country we have no sympathy whatever with Servia. We reprobate all the crimes which are associated with the Servian military party. On general grounds we are inclined to believe that Austria-Hungary is justified in demanding full and prompt repudiation of all those nefarious schemes which have politics as their excuse and murder as their handmaid. Nor could we have a clearer exposition of the Austrian case than is contained in Dr. Dillon's despatch from Vienna, which we publish this morning."

Dr. Dillon's despatch, which was dated July 26, complained that the diplomacy of the Entente Powers was "on an entirely wrong tack." It did not understand the pith of the quarrel between the two States. They were wrong in thinking that Austria put stiff conditions to Servia to punish her for the murder of the Archduke. Austrian statesmen looked upon these conditions merely as means to an end, not as an end in itself, which was "a radical and permanent change of attitude on the part of the Servian Government and nation towards Austria-Hungary." Dr. Dillon said that he was accurately expounding the view taken by the Emperor Joseph's responsible advisers when he said that if that object could be secured by a "spontaneous, sincere and credible declaration, accompanied with corresponding acts of the Servian Government and people," the nine demands embodied in the Note would be withdrawn unhesitatingly. "What was wanted at the outset was a change of spirit, manifesting itself in a transformation of Pan-Slavist policy and an abandonment of all endeavours to further that policy," and as that request, preferred during the past eighteen months, had not been complied with, the obnoxious conditions were devised for the purpose of achieving the results which spontaneous acquiescence in it would have brought about. The real issue, Dr. Dillon pointed out, lay much deeper than the events of the last few weeks. It was of long standing and had been

submitted time and again to the Servian Government and people. Hence the probable refusal with which Austria would meet requests for further delay and reconsideration which might be pressed by one or all of the Entente Powers. Austria was not acting without consulting her allies. Italy had been duly informed of the step contemplated and its probable outcome and had "discerned no ground for insistent objections." The German Government had been kept accurately and fully posted well in advance because of the far-reaching practical decisions which the sequel of this action might suddenly and peremptorily oblige her to take. "All the deliberations on the Note, and the contingent necessity of following it up in ways unwelcome to both Allies, but unavoidable in certain circumstances, took place beforehand." Dr. Dillon then summarised the many steps which Austria had taken for the last three years, as telegraphed by him to the *Daily Telegraph* during that period, of inducing Servia to take up a "neighbourly attitude" and to induce her "to pursue a military policy which shall not be calculated to arouse reasonable misgivings in the minds of those who are responsible for the defence of the Hapsburg Empire." But all was in vain, Servia would give no assurances, show no change of disposition. "On the contrary, the Pan-Servian propaganda has become more widespread, more intense, more successful. And it stands for much more than Pan-Servianism; it is regarded as a centre which focusses all the burning rays of Pan-Slavism which are being steadily concentrated upon the two Great Powers of Middle Europe, and in especial the Dual Monarchy." Therefore Austria now demanded a categorical yea or nay from Servia. "The object which Kaiser Franz Joseph's Ministers had in view when presenting the Note was precisely to elicit a refusal or acceptance pure and simple, not to wrangle about the wording of conditions or diplomatic formulæ. . . . All these things should be carefully carried in mind by those statesmen who are now laudably bending their efforts towards patching up the dispute. . . . The Cabinets of Vienna and Budapest are tired of formulæ, adverse from minimising their differences with Servia and are

prepared for the climax of the crisis. . . . They have counted the cost and will pay it unstintingly. Europe is face to face with a conflict of might between Slavism and those to whom the triumph of Slavism would be disastrous." "It is felt that if they have to come to blows it is best to do it now before the forces on the side of Slavism have grown." Dr. Dillon enumerated some of the causes which had made Slavism already more powerful in the Balkans than Austria.[4] "And to-day Austria-Hungary, the regular working of whose administration and the normal course of whose political existence depends largely upon the conditions prevailing in the Balkans stands isolated. . . . Those grievances constitute the provocation to which Austria-Hungary has now responded." It was with the object of making a clean sweep of the complex of all those political forces which had contrived to inflict appalling and continuous economic losses on the peoples of the Dual Monarchy and were striving to encompass its downfall, and not merely for the punishing of a few assassins that "Austria drew up her Note and laid down the obnoxious conditions."

The *Daily Telegraph* has always been fortunate in its correspondents. The reports of its correspondents in St. Petersburg and Berlin showed that Dr. Dillon had gauged the situation very correctly and had not underrated the Austrian expectation of Russia's attitude, nor the determination on the part of Austria and her ally to face the inevitable conflict.

"The outbreak of war is generally accepted as certain," wrote the St. Petersburg correspondent on July 26. . . . "The *Novoya Vremya* says a peaceful issue is only possible if Germany is not behind Austria with a determination to fight. It would be enough for the German Emperor to utter two words in the right direction and the Austrian Note would be

[4] The anti-governmental agitation among Austria's Ruthenian subjects, alleged to be promoted by Russians, the projected union of Servia and Montenegro, the Pan-Servian declarations made to interviewers by Servian ministers and officials, the sowing of the seeds of disaffection among the Serbs of Bosnia, the estrangement of Rumania from Austria-Hungary and her rapprochement with Russia, and the isolation of Bulgaria.

withdrawn. He must know that an Austrian attack on Servia means war on Russia, which would involve France and perhaps England. The moral responsibility for this threatened danger to the whole of civilisation in Europe is placed by the *Novoya Vremya* on Germany and her Imperial Master. . . ." The one great drawback and puzzle for Russian official and public opinion in the crisis, continued the correspondent, was concerning England's attitude. Was she going to justify her friendship with Russia and her participation in the Triple Entente? Many Russians had serious misgivings about this and referred to past experience. "On the other hand, the successful effect of England's intervention in favour of France in Morocco is cited as proof that British policy towards her friends has changed for the better. It is sincerely hoped that England may be able, in spite of the Irish question, to add the weight of her co-operation to the Russo-French opposition to an Austrian check on Servia, and if it is to be of any use in deterring the aggressor it should be given at once."

On the same day the Berlin correspondent wrote: "Germany is sincerely anxious for peace, but resigned to war if it must be. That may be said to be the attitude both of the Government and of the nation. In neither is there any desire that the conflict between Austria and Servia should spread beyond its present theatre. In both it is fully realised that should Russia enter the lists Germany would be compelled, as well by her treaty obligations as by considerations of self-interest, to do likewise. There is as little doubt about this as there is about the wish of the German Government to prevent the conflagration which has broken out from spreading beyond its present area. It has been suggested that Germany is in part responsible for the contents and tone of the Austrian Note. She has been accused of occasioning, or at least inspiring, that document. This imputation she absolutely repudiates. Austria announced (to her Ally) that she had determined to exact drastic reparation for the wrong which she conceived had been done her, and to adopt such measures as should effectively prevent the Pan-Serb movement from again be-

coming a danger to her. She asked whether she could depend upon the support of her Ally in taking these steps, and the German Government, having weighed the proofs submitted . . . and satisfied itself of their validity, replied in the affirmative. At the present moment the German Government apparently sees danger of complications in Russia alone. . . . It is evidently believed here (Berlin) that both Great Britain and France are exerting themselves to prevent the conflict from becoming a general European one, and great hopes are clearly set on the moderating activities of these two Powers. If Russia should, however, intervene in such a manner as to call into play the uttermost responsibilities which Germany owes to her Ally, it is contended that that country alone will be responsible for all that follows. For it is argued, Austria plainly has justice on her side, and is claiming nothing more than her rights, whereas Russia, by forcibly intervening on behalf of Servia, would be championing the cause of wrong and helping a criminal to escape from well-merited punishment. . . . The overwhelming balance of evidence seems to indicate clearly that Germany is actuated hardly less by a desire to maintain peace than by a determination to stand faithfully by her Ally through thick and thin. Nor can it be doubted that the action and the attitude of the Government to an unusual degree have the approval and support of the nation."

With the beginning of Austro-Servian hostilities, the *Daily Telegraph's* tone altered a little. A great deal of its leading article, "War," on July 29, was in keeping with its previously neutral view of the crisis, but there were signs of anxiety lest Germany were really going so far as to allow Russia's hostility to be provoked. It admitted that the difficulty seemed to be that Russia was as obdurate as Austria in refusing to submit to a Conference, but it thought that the German Emperor held "the issues of European policy in the hollow of his hand." It looked with confidence to him, "not only to hold the scales fairly even, but to give his ultimate vote on the side of the better cause." It did not specify which the better cause was, but its opinion was re-

vealed in: "If Austria desires to punish Servia, a very legitimate object against which we have nothing to say, she also, unless she is much belied, seeks to extend the range of Teutonic influence to the detriment of her great rival, the Slavonic race. It is because of this ulterior object, implicit or explicit, that she provokes the hostility of Russia. We cannot for a moment imagine that it can be any part of the policy of the German Emperor to set a match to such explosive materials as are to be found in the Balkan States and in the country of their natural protector in St. Petersburg. We can quite understand that he desires to support his ally, to give her a free hand in exacting her vengeance, and to warn other Powers to keep their hands off while the Austrian campaign is in progress. But that those who direct the councils of Germany should think that the moment has arrived for a colossal struggle between Teuton and Slav which would finally settle the question which is to control the East of Europe, that is an hypothesis which, in the absence of further proof, we refuse to attribute to Berlin. Everyone knows that a contest like this opens out the prospect of a veritable European Armageddon."

Still, the article continued, the other Powers must go on trying to influence the actual opponents, and to urge "certain considerations likely to shorten and circumscribe the conflict." "Servia is in the wrong, so much must be admitted on all hands. It follows in consequence that Servia must be punished, and the nature of that punishment must be decided by circumstances or by the fortune of war. Vienna has decided to try the latter, and, therefore, Austria must be counselled by her friend and ally to restrict her ambitions within reasonable limits. She has already, we understand, given some kind of pledge that the war shall not be one of territorial conquest . . . and that she has no wish to efface Servia from the map. . . . Russia, too, must be counselled by her friends in the Triple Entente not merely to give good advice to her protégé, Servia, but to take care that her championship of a Slav race does not become a provocative challenge to Teutonism." (The Teuton must not provoke the Slav

and the Slav must not provoke the Teuton! What anxious work it was for the *Daily Telegraph!*) All now rested with the diplomatists. "And Great Britain, ready to help in a good cause whenever opportunity occurs, must look to it that when she speaks, she speaks with authority, in the calm confidence of the strong man armed, whose goods are possessed in peace and security."

On July 30, the *Daily Telegraph* was becoming clearer as to which was the good cause. Its leader, "A Cruel Suspense," referred to the paralysis and anxiety in all capitals. "It appears certain that Russia has mobilised her army in four districts, a very serious step in the present circumstances, although the mobilisation affects the Austrian and not the German frontier.[5] This is a mere matter of precaution, but it is one of those unfortunate measures which, however necessary, are undoubtedly provocative. The inevitable result is seen in the comment of the Berlin correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* who says that these Russian war preparations have fatally prejudiced diplomatic attempts to localise the war. . . . Hence we come back once more to the hopeless uncertainty of Europe. . . . Russia is waiting to see what Austria's final intentions will be; Germany is waiting to see what kind of menace Russia may be prepared to offer; France is waiting to see whether she may not be called on to take side with her Ally, Russia. And Great Britain? Great Britain, too, is waiting, perfectly prepared to discharge whatever her obligations to the Triple Entente may involve. To the Entente, she intends, now and always, to remain faithful."

"A gloomy prospect," said the *Daily Telegraph* on July 31. "There are no rifts in the storm-cloud to-day. Following hard on the announcement of Russian mobilisation comes, as, indeed, was expected and feared, and as Dr. Dillon's messages have repeatedly predicted, a peremptory demand for explana-

[5] It has since been acknowledged that Russia had already ordered a general mobilisation. See the diary of Baron M. F. Schilling, chief of the Chancellery of the Russian Foreign Office in 1914, published under title of "How the War Came" and S. Dobrorolski's "Die Mobilmachung der Russischen Armee 1914."

tions from Berlin. On Wednesday night the German Government requested St. Petersburg to state the purpose of this great augmentation of force on the Austro-Hungarian frontier, and asked her if she were willing to discontinue the movements. . . . According to a report received last night, M. Sazonoff has intimated that the measures already taken cannot be altered. Thus bad begins and worse remains behind; the action of St. Petersburg is closely followed by corresponding action in Berlin. . . ."

Still, there was one bright spot, apparently. "If anything in so black a prospect can, in the faintest degree, relieve our despondency, it will be found in the united front which the Triple Entente is presenting to the world. It is becoming abundantly clear in foreign capitals that France, Russia, and Great Britain mean resolutely to stand shoulder to shoulder, whatever the ultimate cost may be. . . ." "Nevertheless," reflected the *Daily Telegraph*, "what a paradoxical state of affairs it is." "Europe to-day presents the strange spectacle of at least four Powers anxiously desiring peace and being unwillingly dragged into war. We take Germany in the first place. Whether or not she knew the exact content of the Austrian ultimatum, she at all events has made up her mind to support Austrian policy; or, in other words, allows her Ally to lead the way. She must follow, even though the result be war. Berlin sees, as plainly as other capitals, that unless the campaign is strictly localised, the complications that ensue will inevitably lead to a European explosion. Nevertheless, she protests her helplessness. According to Treaty obligations, Germany cannot do otherwise than accept the overpowering obligation that, if Russia takes the field, then she must fight on the side of her partner, Austria. . . .

"Or shall we look at the matter from the side of France? Here again we view the same hurried preparations for an unwelcome campaign. Paris has no immediate quarrel with either Belgrade or Vienna; the fate of Servia is a matter which cannot primarily interest her. Once more, however, comes the compelling force of Alliance. She must take up

her position in support of the Great Northern Empire, while Germany on her part ranges herself on the side of Austria."

"Perhaps the best illustration of all is furnished by the case of our own Empire. Apparently, on the Continent, they are waiting to know what, in certain contingencies, Great Britain will do. To that the answer is plain. If the worst comes to the worst, we, too, will help our friends of the Triple Entente in every way that is practicable. Great Britain, it must be remembered, is in an absolutely different position from that of any of the other nations of Europe. She has to guard her Indian Empire to begin with; she has to consider the interests of her great self-governing Dominions, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. South Africa can have no possible concern with a struggle in the East of Europe, commenced because the Servians murdered an Austrian Archduke. Nevertheless, here, once again, comes in that constraining and imperative obligation to be true to our friendships, the final justification of which resides in the necessity of a Balance of Power, in order to keep a fretful Europe in awe. We detest the very idea of war. But we have made up our minds to shoulder our responsibilities. We belong to the European system. We have our part to play in Continental affairs, and must needs be loyal to those whom we ask to be loyal to us. There must be no change or shadow of turning in that resolve. The whole of the fatal chain of consequences follows from the fact, or the suspicion, that Russia is about to take up arms. Russia's mobilisation, however partial, when it involves the raising of a peace organisation of 400,000 men into a warlike equipment of 700,000, necessarily paves the way for German, Italian, and French mobilisation, none the less real because entered upon as purely precautionary measures. It would seem that in circumstances like these there is a crying need for some leader of public opinion, someone who can legitimately claim to sit in the chair of Europe, to work with might and main in the cause of peace. We were told on Wednesday (July 29) that telegrams had been exchanged between the Tsar and the Kaiser, although their contents have not been revealed. Let us hope that the German Em-

peror, understanding, as he does, the appalling character of the problem before him, is using his best influence to allay the feverish spirit of war. The Tsar must see as clearly as anyone else the tremendous consequences of his mobilisation of forces. If Russia arms herself in this fashion, Germany must clearly do the same in order not to be caught napping. Her Eastern frontier-line towards Russia is by no means as strong as that imposing array of fortresses which, on her Western front, severs her from France. Her martial superiority lies in the rapidity of her mobilisation. How then can she be expected to give away points to her Russian rival in exactly that matter in which she feels herself strong? If Germany, for whatever reason, does not find herself able to initiate pacific counsels in this desperate emergency . . . it seems incumbent upon Great Britain, lying as she does outside the main centre of military activity, to make another attempt to bring the diplomatists together. . . . In the last resort, as we have said, we owe our loyal allegiance to the Triple Entente, and we intend to discharge the debt. But until the last and most formidable crisis arrives . . . what is the main object to which efforts of diplomacy should be directed? It can be expressed very briefly. It is the limitation of the area of conflict so that Austria and Servia may fight out their differences without entangling other Powers." (This appears also to have been Germany's aim.) "It must also involve an appeal both to Russia and to Germany not to complicate the issue by massing immense forces on their borders. We shudder to think that it (the Austro-Servian campaign) may be the preface, first to a struggle between the Teuton and the Slav, and, secondly, and more appalling still, to a formal trial of strength between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente."

Thus the *Daily Telegraph* presented the situation up to the eve of the German declaration of war upon Russia. On August 1, when Russia's answer to the German request for explanation left no hope that war could be averted, when in consequence of Russia's order for a general mobilisation of her army and fleet a state of war had been proclaimed in

Germany,[6] the *Daily Telegraph,* while resolute in its conviction that England, despite no binding engagement, must stand by her friends, ("Let but the Government lead firmly, England, we are sure, will follow without a murmur") did not abandon its view of the mechanical nature of the situation and repeated: "Germany held herself forced to respond to the Russian challenge by putting her army on a war footing." "This indescribable catastrophe!" it wrote on the following day, August 2, upon the German declaration of war. "The irreparable has now happened . . . that we may be compelled, for reasons that no patriot could question, to take a part in it is quite clear." "Both the Admiralty and the War Office are prepared, down to the last detail, for instant and decisive action so soon as the Cabinet shall decree it." "Thus the matter stands. At any hour the decision may be precipitated. Meanwhile, Great Britain maintains her poise, moved as yet by no animosity and no reckless impulse, but fully prepared to strike if she must. She recognises, for example, that the account published yesterday of Germany's efforts to keep negotiations open between Austria-Hungary and Russia, and of the abrupt frustration of these efforts by the Russian decree of general mobilisation, is to the credit of Germany. But the die is cast and the logic of the state of war must be accepted. May God yet stretch out his hand to preserve the civilisation of Europe from submergence, and may he direct those who govern this country in their efforts to maintain the safety and interest of England unharmed and her honour unsullied."

So ended the *Daily Telegraph's* analysis of the course of events leading up to "the indescribable catastrophe." The next day, August 3, it wrote:

"To-day the peoples of the British Empire will learn with a thrill of passionate indignation that an act of deliberate outrage has been done against this country by Germany and that we have been wantonly challenged to throw ourselves instantly into a war in which we had proclaimed ourselves

[6] See Mr. Asquith's announcement in the House of Commons, July 31.

to have no direct interest and which our diplomacy has laboured literally day and night to avert from the unhappy peoples of Europe. The seizure of two British ships in the Kiel Canal is as brutal an act of plain aggression as was committed by one Power upon another. To-day the world will hear what the answer of the British Government is to that insult. The nature of that answer is not open to any doubt. The Power which has constituted itself the mad dog of the European crisis will be given its deserts and the whole might of Great Britain will be thrown into the task. In one day Germany has violated the neutrality of Luxemburg, guaranteed under the hands of the European Powers, has invaded the territory of France without a declaration of war, and has, equally without notice of hostile intentions, laid hands upon two British vessels. At last the suspense is at an end and we believe that every Briton with the stuff of manhood in him will hear the news with relief. Since Germany will have it, she shall have it, and that in full measure. No nation ever went into war with a better heart or a better conscience than Great Britain goes now, and the answer which will be made to-day to a deed of insane provocation will be greeted with one shout of passionate loyalty and fierce resolve from one end of the Empire to the other."

The *Daily Telegraph* bridges the gulf, in the pre-war period, between the Tory and the Liberal Press. As the previous extracts show, it accepted the theory of the balance of Power while alive to the paradox which its practice resulted in of "at least four great Powers of Europe anxiously desiring peace and being unwillingly dragged into war." It was scrupulous in presenting the Austrian case against Servia and equally scrupulous in reporting the reasons actuating Germany to stand by her ally. Its war-like outburst on August 3, denouncing Germany's first exercise of "the rights of angary" as an act of plain aggression and wanton outrage, must be attributed to the logic of war. Germany's violation of the neutrality of Belgium on the day following was, no doubt, the reason why this act subsequently lost its importance in the story of how "the mad dog of Europe" provoked us

to war. But a study of "the fatal chain of consequences" would be incomplete without this record of the first thrill of passionate indignation which relieved the suspense of the previous ten days.

The Liberal papers provide ample material for reconstituting another aspect of that suspense. Their attitude from the first was solely one of protest against intervention. They did not realise the coming danger until comparatively late in the day. On the eve of the declaration of war (August 3) the *Manchester Guardian* spoke of the "rumour of a possible British participation" and added, "the whole thing has come upon us so quickly that there has been no organised public protest."[7] Liberals are not famous in their estimate of the strength of adverse opinion. In this instance, no doubt, their fears concerning the effectiveness of war-propaganda carried on by the *Times, Daily Mail* and allied papers were lulled by the thought that a Liberal Government was in power which less than two months before had explicitly, through the mouth of its Foreign Secretary, repudiated the suggestion that the country was under any obligation to take part in any war. On the strength of three explicit assurances in Parliament in three successive years,[8] they naturally felt

[7] *Manchester Guardian,* London Letter, August 3, 1914.

[8] On March 10, 1912, Lord H. Cecil stated in the House of Commons that there was "a very general belief that this country is under an obligation, not a treaty obligation, but an obligation arising out of an assurance given by the Ministry in the course of diplomatic negotiations, to send a very large armed force out of this country to operate in Europe." Mr. Asquith then said: "I ought to say that it is not true." On March 24, 1913, Mr. Asquith said, in answer to a question: "This country is not under any obligation, not public and known to Parliament, which compels it to take part in any war. In other words, if war arises between European Powers, there are no unpublished agreements which will restrict or hamper the freedom of the Government or of Parliament to decide whether or not Great Britain should participate in a war." On June 11, 1914, Sir E. Grey said: "That answer remains as true to-day as it was a year ago. No negotiations have since been concluded with any Power that would make the statement less true. No such negotiations are in progress and none are likely to be entered upon so far as I can judge. But if any agreement were concluded that made it necessary to withdraw or modify the Prime Minister's statement of last year, it ought, in my opinion, to be, and I suppose that it would be, laid before Parliament."

disinclined to take the war-propaganda seriously, and the further consideration of not wishing to embarrass the Government at such a juncture probably helped to check their organisation of downright opinion hostile to intervention until they were on the edge of the precipice. Before the despatch of the Austrian Note to Servia (July 24) the Liberal press hardly attended to the Balkan situation, being occupied, apart from the Irish crisis and the Caillaux trial, with other matters, Russian Labour troubles and Russian encroachments in Persia, in which Liberal sympathies were educated. The Liberal leader writers did not take off their coats for several days after the *Times* had commenced hostilities; they commented upon the European crisis in a way that showed their detachment, coupled with satisfaction that England's disinterestedness admirably qualified her to play the part of mediator. The *Manchester Guardian* was quite Olympian in its consideration of the case; its manner was like that of a kindly family lawyer dealing with excitable disputants. "The Austrian Note to Servia is very stiff in its terms," it wrote on July 25, "but would not any country be angry which believed that the heir to its throne had been assassinated by a conspiracy of army officers in a neighbouring country and in furtherance of a design to detach one of its provinces from its allegiance?" Come, come, it said to Servia, we do not defend all the demands of the Note and, of course, we agree that you might have been given a little more time for your reply. But on all other grounds wouldn't it be a good thing to promise once more to be a good neighbour and to take the necessary disciplinary steps to see that such an act doesn't happen again? It deeply regretted that Russia had decided to encourage Servia to resistance to Austria. This was very wrong of her. Of course, Austria's annexation of Bosnia was wrong too, and against the law of Europe as laid down in the Berlin Treaty. "But though we have strong sympathy with all reasonable attempts to strengthen the authority of the law of Europe, is this a suitable or even a quite decent occasion, when one nation, whose Royal Family owes its seat on the throne to assassination, is accused of complicity in the

assassination of the Heir-Apparent in a neighbouring country?'' Russia was no doubt right in maintaining that a longer time should be given to Servia, but it was very wrong indeed that she should underline her argument by a threat of ''extreme measures.'' If Austria had been overbearing towards Servia, at any rate she had some excuse. ''Russia's threat of war against Austria is a piece of sheer brutality, not disguised by her sudden discovery of the sacredness of the laws of the Concert of Europe.''

By the Monday following, July 27, the rumour of the *Times'* attitude had evidently reached Manchester, for on that day the *Guardian* had a leader headed ''A Terrible Danger,'' which said: ''It is impossible to exaggerate the danger that now threatens Europe. Austria and Servia are already in a legal state of war. Last week Russia threatened war on Austria unless she did certain things that she has since refused to do. Should Russia carry out her threats and attack Austria, Germany will be compelled by the terms of her alliance with Austria to go to her assistance, and if two members of the Triple Alliance are at war with Russia it is doubtful whether France could, even if she would, remain neutral. The European war, which has been talked about for so long, may be nearer embodiment than any of us can remember. The responsibility is a terrible one, even for England, which has no direct interest in the quarrel between Austria and Servia and is in no danger of being dragged into the conflict by treaties of alliance. Can England use this favoured position to save Europe from disaster? And if she has the will, has she the power, and will she have the opportunity?'' The *Manchester Guardian* rejoiced at the speeches of Sir John Simon and Mr. Acland, the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, promising that Britain's whole weight would be thrown into the scale for peace. There was still time to do a great deal. ''Even if Russia is warlike, her mobilisation is slow. . . . Between now and the first shot in a European war there will probably be an interval of at least a fortnight. That is long enough for a Power with a clear policy of peace to prevent the war from ever beginning.'' The ''first condi-

tion of successful mediation" was "a reputation for impartiality between the disputants" and "here," said the *Guardian*, enthusiastically, "we can all help." "On the whole, English newspapers have avoided taking sides in the quarrel. All with, we think, only one exception, have recognised the extreme provocation that Austria has received and her right to take the strongest measures to secure the punishment of all concerned in the assassination of the Crown Prince. All without exception agree that there are faults in the form of the Austrian Note, and perhaps also in its substance. All, again, recognise that Russia has a natural interest in the independence of Servia and criticism of what she has done so far has been confined to the threat of extreme measures, which we said on Saturday, and still think, was brutal and unnecessary." Thus England could mediate and ought to do so at once. "Let Austria be left quite free to take what military steps she thinks necessary for the punishment (if Servia refuses to punish without being forced) of those concerned in the murder. . . . The occupation of Belgrade should suffice. . . . At the same time let the Powers intimate that the independence of Servia is their concern . . . and reserve to themselves the right to revise any settlement. . . . War between Austria and Servia would be very regrettable, still it would not be a European calamity; and when all is said, Servia would have brought it on herself. Perhaps it is too late to prevent this war. But it is not too late to prevent a more general European war, and the power which hastens by a single hour so frightful a disaster is a traitor to civilisation."

The following day (July 28), the *Guardian's* sanguine expectations of this country's power to mediate were a little shaken by "one conspicuous omission" in Sir E. Grey's statement of the day before. It agreed that he had begun well in seeking the assistance of the European Powers who were not directly concerned in the dispute, but he ought, it urged, to have made a special point of the fact that we were neutral in a sense in which they were not and could not be, however great their desire for peace. Surely this distinctive position

of ours was the true ground on which we were taking the lead in the efforts to mediate? "The best hope of our success in the part of mediators, which we have very properly assumed, is that our impartiality should be above suspicion.". . . "The three Powers (France, Germany and Italy) are all allies of one or other of the disputants. However much Germany might disapprove of the Austrian Note, still if Russia defended Servia by attacking Austria, Germany could not remain neutral. She must, by a treaty 25 years old, and often since renewed, take up arms in Austria's assistance. In that case France might feel herself compelled, if not by letter of her alliance with Russia, by its sentiment, to go to the assistance of her Ally. . . . We have no such commitments. Not only are we neutral now, but we could and ought to remain neutral throughout the whole course of the war. It is strange that Sir E. Grey should not have referred to this fact, which is the chief source of our moral authority in Europe. It is the more strange because some English newspapers, while professing to be anxious to maintain the peace, seem bent on depriving us of that reputation for impartiality on which the success of our efforts for peace must chiefly depend. . . . It is strange, we say, that Sir E. Grey should not have taken the opportunity of pointing out how easily his own efforts at peace might be defeated by our identifying ourselves with one side or the other in this dispute. We want peace in Europe, but we want England to be and to remain at peace even more. We wish that all Englishmen would think and say the same. Most of them certainly do. But there are some who, while anxious for European peace, still think that if we cannot share the blessings of peace with others we must share with them the curses of war." "'Should there arise in any quarter,' wrote the *Times* of yesterday, 'a desire to test our adhesion to the principles that inform our friendships and that thereby guarantee the balance of power in Europe, we shall be found no less ready and determined to vindicate them with the whole strength of the Empire than we have been found whenever they have been tried in the past.' This is mediation with the shirt sleeves rolled up. It is something

far more serious, for it seems to mean that if Russia, Germany and France start fighting we must start too. *The whole future of England depends on the suppression of that spirit. It is war to the knife between it and Liberalism. Either it kills us or we kill it.* Why should Germany choose this, of all times in the world, to test our adherence to what the *Times* calls the principles of our friendship? As though she would not have enough trouble on her hands with Russia and probably France against her, should it come to war, without testing anything else. And as though the disturbance of the balance of power—the foul idol of our foreign policy, as Bright once called it, that has done incomparably more mischief than any worshipped by the heathen—were not likely to come from the other rather than from the side of Germany. These swelling phrases do not hide the truth, which is that if certain people had their way we should be dragged into the war as members of the so-called Triple Entente."

On July 30 the note of anxiety was sharper. Mr. Asquith (July 29) had pronounced the situation one of extreme gravity. "Mr. Asquith," said the *Manchester Guardian*, "spoke with a brevity natural, perhaps, if we were directly concerned, but quite unnatural if it were certain, as it ought to be, that we should not be involved. He does not use idle phrases and the words 'extreme gravity' on his lips are a danger signal of which note must be taken. We wish Servia no ill; we are anxious for the peace of Europe. But Englishmen are not the guardians of Servian well-being or even of the peace of Europe. Their first duty is to England and to the peace of England. Let us for a moment drop solicitude for Europe and think of ourselves. We ought to feel ourselves out of danger, for whichever way the quarrel between Austria and Servia were settled it would not make a scrap of difference to England. We care as little for Belgrade as Belgrade cares for Manchester. But though our neutrality ought to be assured, it is not . . . Sir E. Grey walks deliberately past opportunities of saying that we are and will be neutral in the quarrels of Europe. From the Admiralty we have ominous rumours of naval concentration, and the House

of Commons hastens to efface itself by unanimously deciding not to discuss the political uses to which our Navy may be put, or why it should be put to any use at all in this crisis. This official reticence is in striking contrast with unofficial garrulity. The *Times,* whose influence at great crises in our foreign affairs has almost always been for evil, yesterday took it for granted that if the war were not localised this country ought to take the side of Russia and Servia. It exhorts us to patch up our difficulties about Home Rule in Ireland in order that we may the better be able to see fair play between Austria and Servia. Who made us the arbiters of 'fairplay' between Austria and Servia, and what conceivable interest have we in subordinating any British interest whatever to so entirely gratuitous a task? Having sacrificed Ireland to Servia, the *Times* wants us to sacrifice England to Russia's eccentric notions of what is in the interests of her people. Rather than be guilty of this madness there is no constitutional measure of revolt which Englishmen ought not to use who think more of their duty to their own country than of the real or imaginary interests of the Russian autocracy.''

''Let us examine the reasons of the *Times* for this betrayal of England. 'We have no direct interests at all,' says the *Times,* 'except those of seeing elementary fairplay between Vienna and Belgrade.' That is not a British interest at all. Our interest is in fairplay in England and especially in Ancoats and Hulme. But if we had to choose foreign clients we should prefer others than the Servians, and another cause than that of regicide with impunity. 'We had little direct interest in the controversy resolved at Algeciras and none at all in the controversy that arose at Agadir. Nevertheless, we were ready on both these occasions to give our friends all the support at our command in the vindication of their rightful claims.' Yes, our friends at home have been paying for that support in vastly increased Naval Estimates ever since. But who are our 'friends' abroad whose interests apparently override those of our friends at home? We are friends with every Power in Europe. Why give a preference to one friend over another? 'Because,' says the *Times,* 'it is

our settled interest and traditional policy to uphold the balance of power in Europe.' Away with that foul idol, as Bright called it. But if we must worship the idol, how should we serve it better by throwing our influence on the side of Russia than on the side of Germany? Why strengthen the hand which is already beating us in Persia, and which, if it triumphed over Germany, would presently be felt in Afghanistan and on our frontiers in India? Why should the Slav be so much dearer to us than the Teuton that we should tax the necessaries of the poor to famine prices and the income of the rich to extinction? For this is what our participation in a great European war must mean to England. Have the people of England so far lost all spirit that they will humbly bow to this grotesque conception of our national policy and wait till the guillotine falls and takes off their submissive heads? This is the danger that threatens unless we take prompt steps for our defence. As to the merits of the quarrel, there is one salient fact which stands out above the war. Everyone professes to be anxious to 'localise' the war. But only one Power can do it, namely, Russia. If Russia attack Austria, Germany is bound by treaty to join in defence of Austria; if Germany fights, France is bound to do the same. . . . On the Continent of Europe there is only one free Power, namely, Russia. Will it be contended that it is so vital an interest to Russia that Servia should escape punishment for the misdeeds of her subjects that Russia must needs plunge Europe into the horrors of a general war? The proposition is manifestly absurd. On Russia, therefore, rests the primary responsibility if a war which is and could remain local without anyone being much the worse becomes the scourge of civilisation. Austria has a legitimate grievance, however little we may agree with the means she has chosen for securing satisfaction. But has Russia? Is her national existence threatened? Is any substantial interest of hers at stake at all beyond the ambition to be regarded as the champion of the smaller Slav states? To ask these questions is to answer them. . . . Besides Russia, there is only one other Great Power that is free, and that is England. There may have been tentative naval understand-

ings between us and other Powers, but we have it on the solemn assurance of Sir Edward Grey that at any rate we are free to choose in a European conflict. We have not seen a shred of reason for thinking that the triumph of Germany in a European war in which we had been neutral would injure a single British interest, however small, whereas the triumph of Russia would create a situation for us really formidable. Why then, should not we be determined to remain neutral? And why should we not increase our influence in Europe and strengthen our position by saying so at the earliest possible moment? If Russia makes a general war out of a local war it will be a crime against Europe. If we, who might remain neutral, rush into the war or let our attitude remain doubtful, it will be both a crime and an act of supreme and gratuitous folly. Yet this is the course to which the *Times* clearly points, and unhappily the *Times* is regarded in Europe as speaking with the voice of the British Foreign Office."

That day (July 30) the Special Reserve of the Territorial Force was called out for military service in the United Kingdom. "What is the meaning of all these precautionary measures, naval and military?" demanded the *Manchester Guardian.* "Either the Government are bluffing or they are preparing to take an active and not merely defensive part in the war." By bluffing, it might be hoped to restrain Austria, Germany, and to frighten Italy. But this policy seemed to the *Guardian* "excessively foolish." "We are quite sure that bluff would not have any effect on the policy of the Dual Monarchy or of Germany. It could only have the effect of stiffening Russia in her demands and of destroying our main chance of influencing the councils of Europe for good. . . . If it is bluff, then it is folly. We will not now discuss the alternative explanation, namely, that the Government means to take part in a general war, because we will not attribute to it except on direct evidence a policy that would surpass folly and approach criminality. But we should fail in our duty if we disguised our belief that we are running the gravest dangers, and that not because honour bids us or in-

terest counsels, but because a powerful and irresponsible group of persons, some of them political, some official, some holding great rank and influence, have persuaded themselves that it is right. . . . The elements of danger are these. At the head of affairs is a Government which may be bluffing and is fallible. Behind it there are strong influences, social and bureaucratic, which are anxious for war. In the newspapers there is visible the working of a conspiracy to drag us into war. The House of Commons, which should be the guardian of the national interests at such a time as this, is discussing the Milk and Dairies Bill (Mr. Asquith calls that "presenting a united front to the nations of Europe"), and there is a rumour that it will in a few days be adjourned as a useless encumbrance on the full freedom of the Executive, only to be called together again in case money should be required for a war already determined upon." Everywhere, said the *Guardian,* feverishly, there was evidence of organisation for war; nowhere a sign that the forces for peace were being mobilised. At such a time the Government ought to take special precautions against being carried away against its better judgment into a policy which it had not really examined and "be in constant touch with the people and act in the fullest publicity." "But in foreign affairs which, so far from being more difficult or abstruse are, as a rule, much simpler than domestic legislation, Governments make a virtue of isolation from popular opinion. When a foreign crisis comes they take refuge in mystery and silence. Candour and free discussion, which are virtues in domestic affairs, become vices in foreign difficulties. It is this secrecy elevated into a system which makes the chief danger of our present position. If the facts were known and there were free discussion there would be no danger. It is the darkness we fear." (The *Manchester Guardian* maintained up to the last moment most passionately that, according to Ministers' own statements, England was absolutely free to choose her own course). "We tried to argue yesterday from the interest of this country. It will be said that we have not only interests but duties, and that honour may sometimes bid us do things that are against our

own interests. We agree. It was argued, for example, at the time of the Agadir dispute that, though we were under no contracted obligation to assist France by force of arms, we were morally bound because we had got her into the trouble by concluding with her a treaty relating to Morocco. We did not agree with the argument, but we respected it. No such argument applies now. The origin of the dispute is one in which neither we nor France have any concern whatever. It is not remotely contemplated in any of our treaties with France. We have, moreover, been specifically assured that there is no contract between us and France which impairs our freedom of choice in the event of a war. We have a completely white sheet before us on which we are free to write anything or nothing so far as our contracts with European Powers are concerned. But the Government is not free as regards its own people. It is the trustee of the nation and bound above all to consider its interests and the interests of the mass of the community, on whom the burden of war really falls. It boasts, and with justice, that it has tried to increase the people's sum of happiness. If it goes to war it takes away everything that it has given and leaves them far poorer than before. It is trying to relieve suffering and to diminish disease. War is the most prolific breeder of both. It came in on the country's confidence that it would protect the food of the people. There is no Protectionist tax that could be devised that is capable of raising the price of food to the extent that a fortnight of serious war will do. We are free to choose, said Sir Edward Grey and the Prime Minister. We are free as regards Europe. We are not free as regards England. Honour is not involved abroad. It is irretrievably involved at home."

A second leading article on this date (July 31) dealt with "Parliament and the Crisis." Here again the *Manchester Guardian* protested passionately against "the almost unthinkable supposition that by some hidden contract England had been technically committed, behind her back, to the ruinous madness of a share in the wicked gamble of a war between two militarist leagues on the Continent." There was

nothing, it said, known to the public which could account for the atmosphere of sensational solemnity in which the Prime Minister the day before had enveloped his announcement that the Home Rule Bill was to be postponed. He had spoken of "the issues of peace and war" as "hanging in the balance." For Russia and Germany that was so, said the leader, and in almost as terrible a degree it was so for France and Italy. But it could not be so for England except on "the almost unthinkable assumption" above quoted. It was gravely disconcerting to the *Manchester Guardian* to hear further rumours of an intention to adjourn the sittings of Parliament. "On the assumption that our Foreign Office's record for sanity is clear, what occasion can there be for interrupting the orderly transaction of our domestic business? There is not the faintest chance of any attack on ourselves so long as we keep out of this quarrel, which is none of ours. The Triple Alliance desires nothing more eagerly than that we should be left uninvolved." And this sudden shelving of the Irish Bill was quite unnecessary, in the *Manchester Guardian's* opinion, to show our united front to foreign Powers. We could get on with our rôle as mediator quite well while also getting on with the Irish Bill. In a general way, it said, it was inclined to dislike and distrust sudden announcements, made with an air of portentous mystery, that the nation's ordinary business must close down for its alleged security from terrible but unexplained dangers abroad. Not merely wars but even rumours of wars, had served too often, it said, in the past as graves for questions which had embarrassed public men and for reforms which powerful interests had not liked. But the most regrettable and disquieting part of the postponement was its apparently being symptomatic of the Government's state of mind. If the country's foreign relations were what, the *Guardian* said, it had a right to assume they were, then the Government was showing an exaggerated sense of the seriousness of a quarrel between other Powers. And in defending the Government against the suspicion of having led the country into a "calamitous foreign entanglement" it felt that it was not gratifying to have

to plead that it was only betraying an exaggerated or causeless excitement and not an excitement for which there was only too sinister a cause.

Upon the news of the Russian mobilisation on Saturday, August 1, the *Manchester Guardian's* alarm was fully awakened. "There is in our midst," it expostulated, "an organised conspiracy to drag us into the war should the attempts of the peace-makers fail." " 'Conspiracy,' we say because it is disloyal to Parliament, which is the constitutional guardian of the national interests in times of crisis. The conspirators prefer the confidence of selected newspaper editors to that of the representatives of the people. The objects of the conspirators are now openly avowed. We are to join in, not under certain conditions or in defence of this or that British interest which may happen to be threatened, but in any case. We are to do so for three reasons. The first is that we are bound in our own interest to maintain the balance of power in Europe. The second is that we are the protectors of the neutrality of Belgium. The third, that we are in honour bound to stand by our friends. Each of these reasons must be considered separately and tried not by tests of self-interest alone, but also by the highest standards of British honour. For we seek no peace except with honour intact."

The *Manchester Guardian* then proceeded to deal with these three arguments.

"The Balance of Power, as a doctrine of English policy, was responsible for the long feud with France in the 18th century, culminating in the war with Revolutionary France. It made the National Debt. It lost England the great lead that it had obtained in constitutional liberties and condemned us to the worst period of reaction in our history. . . . Its revival has been the work of the last seven to eight years and, we deeply regret to think, has been coincident with the access to power of the Liberal Government. We do not say that it has been its doing. The doctrine has at all times been the greatest enemy of progress. . . . But even if we admired this doctrine as much as we in fact detest it, it supplies no reason why we should take the side of Russia against Germany. If

Russia wins there will be the greatest disturbance of the Balance of Power that the world has ever seen. The whole condition of our continued existence as an Asiatic Power will have to be revised, and over all the world, wherever we come into contact with Russia, we shall have a repetition of the self-effacement which we have witnessed in Persia. The victory of Germany, on the other hand, would in effect be a victory for the principle of the Balance of Power. If we believe in this principle—which we do not—then we might be for intervention on the side of Germany. Because we do not believe in it we are able, without the least misgiving, to counsel neutrality as the right policy for this country."[9]

The Neutrality of Belgium.—"Then we are to side with Russia against Germany because we are guarantors of the neutrality of Belgium, which, it is assumed, is in danger from Germany and from her alone. The *Times* has quoted the authority of Gladstone for this proposition. Now it is quite true that during the Franco-German war Lord Granville concluded treaties with both France and Germany guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium. Article 3 of both treaties declares that they are to remain in force during the continuance of the war and for twelve months afterwards. Both treaties have, therefore, expired. But it will be said there are the earlier treaties of the 'forties in which we, in common with most of the Great Powers, guaranteed Belgian neutrality. Are we not bound by those? Let the great Lord Derby answer for us. He was asked in 1867 whether we were not bound by a similar collective guarantee in the case of Luxemburg. He said No. 'We are bound in honour—you cannot place a legal construction upon it—to see, in concert with others, that these arrangements are maintained. But if the other Powers join with us it is certain that there will be no violation of neutrality. If they, situated exactly as we are, decline to join, we are not bound single-handed to make up the deficiency. Such a guarantee has obviously rather the character of a moral sanction to the arrangements which it defends than

[9] *cf.* The *Nation's* note of the history of the Balance of Power, after the outbreak of the war, August 22, 1914, p. 126 of this book.

that of a contingent liability to make war. It would, no doubt, give a right to make war but would not necessarily impose the obligation.' And that is the view taken by most international lawyers. We are, therefore, absolutely free; there is no entanglement in Belgium."

Honour.—"Then is it honour that we must fight for? No, for honour's sake we must keep the peace. There are, as Mr. Asquith and Sir E. Grey have both told us, no engagements with European Powers that should take away our perfect freedom of choice. . . . Being free as regards Europe, we are not free as regards our own people, but must decide in favour of neutrality. For if we decide differently then we violate dozens of promises made to our own people, promises to seek peace, to protect the poor, to husband the resources of the country, to promote peaceful progress." If these promises were broken the *Manchester Guardian* thought England's honour would be "tarnished," to say nothing of her "interests being sacrificed."

On Monday, August 3, it wrote as follows: ("On the Brink.") "Saturday and Sunday were the fateful days of a century. On Saturday, Germany declared war on Russia. Early the next morning her troops invaded Luxemburg and in the course of the day they are alleged to have crossed the French frontier at two points not specified. The war party in England will use these facts to work up feeling against Germany as the aggressor and the violator of international law; but sober Englishmen, while grieving that Germany should have thought fit to take this frightful responsibility, will not let German military opinion of what is best for Germany affect their own judgment of what is best for England. Germany was not free to choose; whether war was to come depended not so much on what she did as on what Russia meant to do. Having convinced herself, and not without cause, that Russia meant war, she conceived that her policy was one for her soldiers to determine on purely military grounds. And they held, it would seem, that as war had to come, it was Germany's duty to take advantage of the initiative that her superior system of organisation gave to

her. She seems to have begun the fighting, but not, assuredly, with a light heart. Germany's position is graver than it has been since the days of the great Frederic. With the genius and the brilliancy of France on the one flank and the overwhelming numbers of Russia on the other, she felt herself fighting against odds for her very existence. Her only chance, she probably reflected, lay in taking her enemies in detail and in flinging herself on the one before the other was fully prepared. It was a desperate calculation, but so is her case. From Italy she will get no help and Austria will be hard put to it. . . . Sooner or later she will bear the whole brunt of the war with Russia and France at once. And she was uncertain of the neutrality of England. Therefore she decided to strike the first blow. *We deeply regret it but we understand.* Nor shall we apply a harsh judgment to what man or nation does for very life's sake." . . . "We are, if possible, more convinced than ever that duty and interest alike demand that this country should not make itself an accessory to the crime against reason and human happiness that is now beginning. . . . The nations of Europe have been compelled to face this death by the network of promises and counter-promises in which the folly of their statesmen has enmeshed them. England alone among the great Powers stood quite outside the entanglements of the European system which is now breaking up. Italy was involved—how deeply we do not know—but she has managed, by a great effort, to extricate herself. And yet, at the very moment that her Government has struggled free we are asked to put on her chains . . . we are told by the conspirators that honour bids us go to war. Whose honour? Not that of the Government, for if what the war party say were true, then what Mr. Asquith and Sir E. Grey said was false. How could we be free to decide if honour compelled us to decide one way? Whose honour? Not that of the people, for no people are so sensitive as our own on the point of honour, and they are unstirred by the least trace of the generous impulse that would inspire them if they had to make sacrifices for honour's sake. Whose honour, then? The honour of those who have led France to

hope that we would undertake responsibilities which all the time they were anxious to conceal from Englishmen? If any have been guilty of that double perfidy to England and to France, not all the blood of every English soldier and sailor, not all the tears of widows and orphans could restore to them the honour which they have so shamelessly lost. Then it is for self-interest that we are to go to war? Whose self-interest? . . . They say that we cannot see France crushed. But can we see Germany crushed and Russia straddling across Europe as well as Asia? If France were without a friend, if she were being wantonly invaded, and if we could save her by threatening to throw our fleet into the balance, the position would be different. But we can, in fact, save her from none of the consequences in which her Russian Alliance—an alliance hated by an enormous number of liberty-loving Frenchmen—may involve her. We might destroy or imprison the German fleet and so release the French fleet for its duties, but we could not free a yard of French soil from the invader. On the other hand, by neutrality we may be in the best possible position to restrain the victor from a wrong or brutal use of his triumph. . . ."

In its second leader, the *Manchester Guardian* flung itself violently upon an argument, one whose "cynicism" it described as "too shameless" to be passed over, namely "the pretence that it would be in some way to the good of European morals that we should thrust ourselves in." "It is actually said by the *Times* that Russia 'will fight upon the side of European moral' and that the cause of 'civilised relations between peoples,' and even—crowning effort of cant—the cause of the 'peace of the world' would gain by our backing her." "Let us be quite clear about this," said the *Guardian*. "If we are jockeyed into fighting it will be for a cause supremely disreputable. Of all the smaller Powers of Europe, Servia is, quite decidedly, the one whose name is most foully daubed with dishonour. The record of her rulers and her policy in recent years is unmatched as a tissue of cruelty, greed, hypocrisy and illfaith. If it were physically possible for Servia to be towed out to sea and sunk there,

the air of Europe would at once seem cleaner. Disgraced in many things before, she has a disgracefully bad cause in her quarrel with Austria, the cause of a harbourer of murderers against the friends of the murdered persons. And what Servia is among the lesser Powers, Russia, so far as regards her Government, is among the great ones. We have lately touched so much diplomatic pitch that we have all tended to become tactful and considerate of the feelings of pitch to the point of tacit insincerity. But the blackness of the Russian Government, as a dealer with men's and women's lives and liberties, is inky." The *Guardian* gave details of Finnish, Jewish and political suppression, etc. "We must remember that the Russian Government is now at last standing almost face to face with the peoples, Russian and other, that it has wronged and that its best hope of staving off retribution is in foreign war. Foreign war is the lightning conductor with which every corrupt Government tries to divert from itself the fire that its crimes have called down on it. If we step in wantonly to back Russia we do not back her against Germany and Austria alone. We back her against her own maltreated and semi-insurgent subjects; we strengthen her brute fist in Finland; we set her up again as a confident and secure persecutor of Jews; we put back the clock of freedom and of civilised government throughout far the largest area that the misconduct of any one Power in Europe can injure, and besides all that we make securely dominant in Asia the one Power which threatens us there. The idea of the Russian Government caring one straw about 'European moral,' except perhaps as something that might become a danger to it if it came into existence, would be almost too grim as a joke. As a suggestion seriously offered for consumption by credulous people, it is a quite repulsive piece of humbug. The Russian Government, like most other despotic governments, regards war with absolute cynicism, and any country of Western Europe which went into war, of its own free will, in league with so tainted an ally, would do well to forget the language of morality and Christianity until that particular association had ceased."

This issue of the *Manchester Guardian* (Monday, August 3,) was a memorable one. In its pages surged the now fast rising tide of Liberal anti-war feeling and indignation with the "sinister infatuation" of the Northcliffe press. "The need for giving expression to that feeling," it wrote, "is increasingly recognised" and notices of the organisation which had at last been set on foot "to co-ordinate and strengthen the demands that Great Britain shall take no part in such a war unless she is directly attacked" crowded its columns. On a full page headed "Public Opinion and the War: England's Duty," was set out a chorus of vehement protest, led by the Manifestos issued by two Committees which had been hastily formed to agitate in favour of neutrality. The first Manifesto was issued by the British Neutrality Committee and signed by Lord Courtney of Penwith, J. Ramsay MacDonald, Gilbert Murray, A. G. Gardiner (Editor of the *Daily News*), Graham Wallas, G. M. Trevelyan, L. T. Hobhouse, J. A. Hobson, F. W. Hirst, J. L. Hammond and Basil Williams. It protested against the statements that we were bound both by engagements and vital interests to take part in the war and called attention to the assurances given during the last three years by the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary as to our freedom from obligation. The second Manifesto, drawn up by a Provisional Committee "to bring home to the public the importance of showing the strength of the feeling in favour of neutrality," was signed by Lord Welby, the Lord Mayor of Manchester, the Lord Provost of Glasgow, the Bishop of Lincoln, the Bishop of Hereford, Sir W. Mather, Sir A. Spicer, Mr. C. P. Scott (Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*), Sir A. Haworth, Sir W. Hartley, Mr. D. A. Thomas (afterwards Lord Rhondda), Prof. J. J. Thomson, Dr. Horton, Mr. Richard Whiteing, Mr. W. Stubbs, Mr. Ernest Schuster, and Mr. P. Price. It dealt in detail with the war arguments, firstly the plea that Britain "must ensure the victory to France and Russia in order to maintain the balance of power." "If we are successful . . . we shall upset that balance enormously by making her (Russia) the dominant military Power of Europe, possibly the dictator both in this continent and in

Asia." Russia's population, it said, was at least 200 millions, partly Asiatic and Mohammedan. She was impregnable by invasion. Her industrial and commercial life was so undeveloped that she would feel the strain of war "less than more highly developed nations." She could put six million men into the field, could draw upon "vast resources of human material only partly civilised, governed by a military autocracy largely hostile to Western ideas of political and religious freedom."

"Germany, on the other hand, is a nation of sixty-five millions, wedged in between hostile States, highly civilised, with a culture that has contributed enormously in the past to Western civilisation, racially allied to ourselves and with moral ideals largely resembling our own, possessing a commercial and industrial life that is dependent on an orderly and stable Europe. Our two peoples have maintained unbroken peace since their earliest history."

"The last war we fought upon the Continent was for the purpose of checking the growth of Russia. We are now asked to go to war to promote it." [10] The Crimean war, said the Manifesto, was very popular and its opponents were bitterly derided, but it was now admitted to have been a monstrous absurdity.

The Manifesto next condemned the plea that Britain was bound to help France always. "The *Entente Cordiale* was certainly never intended by the British nation as a war alliance," only as "an expression of goodwill marking the settlement of old quarrels, and it has always been understood that our diplomatic obligations were discharged by our support of France in the Morocco crisis."

The plea of the neutrality of Belgium was met by the same arguments as those put forward in the leading article previously quoted. Lord Derby's saying that the Belgian question might give us "a right to make war" but "would not necessarily impose an obligation," was quoted and it was

[10] See Lord Loreburn's famous summary of the cause of British intervention—"We went to war in a Russian quarrel because we were tied to France in the dark," in his book "How the War Came."

urged that if Britain remained neutral she would be strongest after war and able to protect Belgian interests and "to act as arbiter in the general interest."

Moreover, since Italy—"always presumed to be a party to the Triple Alliance"—had declared her neutrality, surely Britain, who was "party to no alliance," could "do as much, and as the forces of Italy were brought into the general calculation of the resources of the Triple Alliance and are not now forthcoming we should be still further tilting the balance if we were to join the other side."

"No British interest is involved in this war, while the gravest interests will be placed in jeopardy by our entrance into it." "Britain would no longer be the financial centre of the world." "This would temporarily and perhaps permanently be transferred to the other side of the Atlantic."

"If we go to war it will not be to defend any British right from violation. We do not even allege that Germany or Austria has wronged or affronted us in any way. We cannot even pretend to a sense of wrong. We shall attack them because in a quarrel of very complex issues in which we have no qualifications to act as judge, we presume to decide between them and their opponents, or because on the basis of some cold calculations of high politics, which all the facts show to be of very questionable correctness, our security and interest render it opportune to do so."

The Manifesto concluded with the words:

"The British people can best serve the cause of right and justice, their best interests and those of civilisation, by remaining the one Great Power in Europe that has not yielded to the war madness."

Accompanying these manifestoes were letters and resolutions from a great number of influential people and organisations in favour of neutrality. On the previous Saturday, the *Manchester Guardian* had published an "Appeal to Scholars," which brought response from Professors Herford, Conway and Alexander, of Manchester, Professor Geldart, of Oxford, and Dr. W. H. Bennett, the Principal of Lancashire College. Resolutions were passed during the week-end

at numerous Liberal gatherings all over the country, and telegraphed to the Prime Minister. "They varied in terms," reported the *Guardian*, "but agreed in maintaining a strict neutrality." "Throughout the kingdom yesterday," it continued, "the Church responded to the appeal for prayer. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishops devoted their sermons to the possibility of European war. The Free Churches everywhere passed resolutions after the services or at special meetings calling for neutrality on our part. The forms of these resolutions showed their spontaneity. One of the most striking demands in neutrality is issued by Professors and Fellows of Cambridge University."

A vivid picture of scenes in London on the Sunday night was given by the London correspondent of the paper, who reported that there was much excitement but no war fever. The following are extracts:— "'Mobilisation of the British Fleet—Official' was being sung by newsboys with armfuls of Sunday papers all over the West-end to-night. This shriek of impending war seemed to bring the people running into the streets . . . There was a rush for the papers . . . There was plenty of excitement, but none of that furious passion one remembers so well from the early times of the Boer war. The street crowd did not seem to know what the fight, if fight there is to be for us, would be about. Papers were read quietly with some such colourless remark as 'Looks as if we are going to do something now.'"

"You realised the strange nature of this Sunday night best in Trafalgar Square, where people were standing in a solid mass, kept out by mere scent of excitement. Late at night these watchers for something to turn up were delighted by the appearance of half a dozen red coats and a couple of blue jackets. The soldiers and sailors were surrounded and loudly cheered."

. . . . . .

"Last night (*i.e.*, Saturday, August 1st) about eleven o'clock in Piccadilly Circus, in the middle of a crowd passing out of the theatres and music halls, a news-seller shouted the first tidings of the war. He was drunk, rather unsteady,

and he flourished his news-bill instead of selling his papers. He had not read his bill, but he knew what he hoped. 'War between England and Germany,' he yelled. 'Bloody War! England and Germany—War! Blood—''—— The crowd surrounded him and he was soon in the middle of a quarrel, as he wanted sixpence for a penny paper. Then the crowd engulfed him, but his voice could be heard now and then shouting 'Blood—' People soon discovered that he had got his story wrong. His paper gave the news of the German proclamation of war against Russia, but he seemed to stand for a symbol for the horror and helplessness of the events that were reaching their fever point.''

Yet this dramatic episode has a significance beyond the symbolism which the reporter found in it. It is the impression it made upon him, the fact that he found it symbolic, which is more interesting from a psychological standpoint than the episode itself, which is not very remarkable. Such incidents are natural to times of public excitement and this one reveals no more than a tipsy newspaper seller's shrewd choice of the most profitable cry. Being tipsy, and therefore more instinctive, he was awake to the fact that people in general prefer any news to suspense, and few people in his condition would not have made the slight mistake in time that he did. After all, he was right in the end. His story was true on Monday night.

What is remarkable in this London letter of Sunday evening, August 2, is what is remarkable throughout the pages of the *Manchester Guardian* and *Daily News* during the two or three days previous to the outbreak of war, and that is the sudden indignant amazement of Liberals at discovering the country's plight and realising, though at first dimly, that affairs were moving beyond their control. The vehemence of the protests against intervention, the impressive array of them,—their form, indicative, as the *Guardian* remarked, of their spontaneity, are eloquent of the complete surprise and unawareness of danger in which staunch Liberals were taken. They were aghast, dumbfounded. Such a catastrophe as participation in a European war was unbelievable under the

auspices of their own Government. What did it matter that the *Times* was for intervention? The Government did not take its orders from Lord Northcliffe. It was a *Liberal* Government, and its responsible heads, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, had, on three occasions, the last of which was very recent, given the clearest possible assurances of the country's freedom from continental entanglements. Lord Hugh Cecil's question to Mr. Asquith on March 10, 1912,[11] had gone beyond the question of actual treaty obligation, had referred to the possibility of the existence of an obligation arising merely out of "an assurance given by the Ministry in the course of diplomatic negotiations"; Mr. Asquith's answer had repudiated the existence of even this loose kind of undertaking. His reply in the next year to a similar question had been still more reassuring. "This country," he had said, "is not under any obligation not public and known to Parliament which compels it to take part in any war. In other words, if war arises between European Powers, there are no unpublished agreements which will restrict or hamper the freedom of the Government or of Parliament to decide whether or not Great Britain should participate in a war." Finally, less than two months previously, Sir E. Grey had said, referring to Mr. Asquith's statement, "That answer remains as true to-day as it was a year ago."[12] How, in face of these assurances

[11] See footnote p. 43.

[12] The facts nevertheless were that in January, 1906, Sir E. Grey and Lord Haldane, Minister for War, had secretly arranged for the military collaboration of France and England in the event of a war between France and Germany. This they did, as Lord Loreburn states in his book "How the War Came," "by means of communications with the French Ambassador and of military and naval conversations between the General Staffs of the two countries who worked out plans for joint action in war if Great Britain should intervene. They did it behind the backs of nearly all their Cabinet colleagues, and, what really matters, without Parliament being in any way made aware that a policy of active intervention between France and Germany was being contemplated." By the end of 1910 these plans had developed to the extent of completed arrangements for the landing of a British expeditionary force on the Continent, if necessary in Belgium with or without the consent of the Belgian authorities. Early in 1914, there was in existence a written agreement between the French and British

could Liberals be anxious or suspicious about Governmental policy at this crisis until . . . until the speeches of Liberal Ministers themselves, the "sensational gravity" of Mr. Asquith's and Sir E. Grey's manners and statements in the House of Commons, left no loophole of escape from anxiety and suspicion? *Then* the reality of danger broke upon the hitherto unsuspecting Liberals, but it broke as a death warrant breaks upon a man who is suddenly told by his doctor that he has not long to live, depriving him of the power to realise the full meaning of his sentence. The *Manchester Guar-*

Governments providing for the manner in which payments on behalf of the *British Expeditionary Force operating in North France* were to be made. See "England's War Preparations" in the *Kriegsschuld frage* of July, 1924, by Major W. C. Bridge, official translator to the British War Office in 1914.

In September 1912 Sazonov, the Russian Foreign Minister, writing from London to the Czar, said

"On his own initiative Grey then gave me a confirmation of what I already know through Poincaré—an agreement exists between France and Great Britain under which, in the event of war with Germany, Great Britain has accepted the obligation of bringing assistance to France not only on the sea but on land by landing troops on the continent." (No. 508 of the documents reproduced in Der Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis 1911-1914, Berlin, 1924. These documents were taken from the collection published by the Soviet in 1922. A French translation, published by René Marchand (Un livre Noir. Diplomatie d'Avant Guerre d'après les Documents des Archives Russes, 1911-1914, 2 vols.. Paris 1922, 1923 is also available.)

Finally, in his report of Dec. 5, 1912, Isvolski, the Russian Minister in Paris, reported that the Franco-British military convention was as thorough as the Franco-Russian, the only difference being that the former was signed by the chiefs of the two headquarters staffs, and on this account, "so to speak," was not obligatory upon the British Government. (No. 608 of the above documents.) The documents from which these extracts are taken also show that Sir E. Grey was willing in 1914 to conclude agreements with Russia similar to those in existence between England and France. On the occasion of King George's visit to Paris in April 1914 negotiations took place between Sir E. Grey and the French and Russian diplomatists. On the subject of these negotiations Isvolski wrote to Sazonov April 29, 1914 (No. 1327 of the above documents).

" Sir Edward Grey replied to M. Doumergue (the French Minister "who had put forward the Russian proposals) that he was personally "entirely in sympathy with the ideas which he had expressed and

dian's London correspondent wrote of the anti-war meeting held in Trafalgar Square on the Sunday:—

"The Peace demonstration . . . this afternoon was evidence of the amazingly sudden way in which our own crisis has flared into being. Although a possible British participation has been rumoured for several days, the whole thing has come upon us so quickly that there has been no organised

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"was quite ready to conclude an agreement with Russia in the form "of that in existence between Great Britain and France. *But he did "not conceal from M. Doumergue that there were, not only in the "Government party but even among the members of the Cabinet, per-"sons who were prejudiced against Russia and very little inclined to "any further approach to her. However he expressed the hope that "he would be able to bring over Mr. Asquith and the other members "of the Government to his view. He suggested the following procedure*: "*First the two Cabinets—London and Paris—should, after mutual "agreement, communicate to the S. Petersburg Cabinet all existing "agreements between Great Britain and France, namely*:

" (1) *The land and sea conventions worked out by the general and " naval staffs which, as you are aware, have something of a condi-" tional character; and*

" (2) *the political agreement which is in the form of an exchange of " letters between Sir E. Grey and the French Ambassador in " London.*

. . . . . .

" *Sir E. Grey's idea is that only a naval convention could be con-" cluded between us and Great Britain, and not a land convention, " since all the British land forces are already distributed in ad-" vance and they obviously could not cooperate with the Russian " forces. He added that on his return to London he would at once " submit the above plan to Mr. Asquith and his other colleagues " for examination.*

. . . . . .

" All three of the persons who had taken part in the discussion, "M.M. Doumergue, Cambon and De Margerie—told me that they had "been astonished by Sir E. Grey's clearly and decidedly expressed "willingness to proceed toward a closer rapprochement with Russia. "They were convinced that his reservations in regard to Mr. Asquith "and the other members of his Cabinet are only of a formal character. "If he were not certain already of their agreement he would not have "made such concrete proposals."

According to a telegram on May 15, 1914, the British-French agreements were communicated to the Russian diplomats and the action approved by the British Cabinet. Count Benckendorff (the Russian

public protest, and it was left to the Socialists this afternoon to hold the first anti-war meeting in the country. It was the biggest Trafalgar Square demonstration held for years, far larger, for instance, than the most important of the suffragist rallies. The solidarity of which all the leaders spoke was present, too, in this curiously composite crowd, in which Germans and Frenchmen stood peaceably beside their English comrades. The mind of the crowd was full of a quiet indignation and of alarm at the realisation that they had been, as it were, pushed to the edge of a precipice without a word of warning. There were feeble attempts at a war demonstration on the edge of the gathering, but the violent downfall of rain at half-past four was enough to disperse these feeble-hearted Jingoes, while the solid core of the meeting stood gallantly to their umbrellas and cheered for the war against war.'' There is no deep consternation in this note, rather a confidence that, though events were undoubtedly serious, the Jingoes could, even at this late hour, be dispersed by the ''solid core'' of Liberal opposition to their comparatively feeble schemes. The Jingo case for British participation in the war hadn't, argued the Liberals, a leg to stand on; every plea put forward by them had been demolished in the Liberal press. The existence of any factor powerful enough to overcome their arguments, other than a Jingo conspiracy to drag the country into war, was not yet fully realised by Liberals. The only possible other factor, a secret obligation, was still unthinkable in view of Ministerial pledges—its existence would mean the betrayal of democracy.

Ambassador in London) reports (No. 1340 of the same documents): '' While the agreements with France covering the event of war were ''primarily concerned with the cooperation of the armies, any agree- ''ments with Russia must, in Sir Edward's view, from the nature of ''things have reference to the navies. The negotiations should ac- ''cordingly be carried on between the Russian and British naval staffs. ''The negotiations with France had taken place in London: the French ''military and naval attachés in London had gone over to Paris as ''necessary when further instructions were needed. Finally, Prince ''Louis of Battenberg had gone quite unofficially to Paris to initial the ''agreements.''

The awakening came on Monday, Aug. 3, upon Sir E. Grey's speech in the House of Commons. The *Manchester Guardian's* Parliamentary correspondent described the speech and the scene in the House as follows:

"*A Fateful Sitting of the Commons.*"—"Rather less than two hours sufficed to-day for the essential passages of the strangest, the most moving and in every sense of the word the most fateful sitting of Parliament within living memory. In some of its accessories the scene was most theatrical." (Double rows of chairs over the centre of the floor; although the House had often been more crowded, no extra chairs had been put there since the Home Rule Bill of 1893.)

"Only one of the Greater Powers was represented in the Diplomatic Gallery. Listening to the debate or rather to Sir E. Grey's momentous statement—for that comprised almost the whole of the speech making—the Russian Ambassador must have wondered, with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, why the Foreign Secretary had little to say about Russia." Ministers "whose names had been associated with rumours of resignation" were specially cheered, notably by the Opposition (presumably for not having resigned). The Premier, looking very grave, "walked slowly to his place and sat down in silence beside Sir E. Grey."

"Ordinary business soon went by the board." The Moratorium Bill was passed with lightning rapidity: "in less time than it takes to write the words the Bill was through Committee, read a third time, and speeding on its way to the other House." "In an atmosphere thus prepared for the great event of the day, Sir E. Grey rose to take the nation into the confidence of the Cabinet." "Every word of his skilfully phrased and profoundly moving argument had been committed to manuscript. . . . As could be perceived from the placidity with which they endured the suspense of a narrative that kept less privileged hearers in an agony of alternating encouragement and despair, the Opposition leaders were already aware of what was coming. Consequently they took no part in the rival demonstrations, neither in the faint applause of the Ministerialists as some fitful gleam of hope

seemed to brighten the horizon, nor in the fierce outbursts of acclamation with which the Unionists hailed every additional portent of the gathering storm.". . .

"For a long time the Foreign Minister kept his hearers in a state of almost torturing uncertainty. On the surface the earlier part of the statement seemed to be a justification for neutrality or relative inaction. Sir E. Grey reaffirmed that 'no obligations' rested on England. Yet 'our long-standing friendship with France'—('and with Germany,' interjected a Liberal member)—had led to arrangements which, in Sir E. Grey's opinion, involved us in certain responsibilities."[13] On the "hypothetical case" of a possible attack on the French coast by Germany, Grey, "raising his voice and speaking with unusual emphasis . . . declared that we could not possibly stand aside." "Amid the general cheering evoked by this declaration, the Nationalists made their voices unmistakably heard. 'Hurrah for France!' shouted Mr. William Redmond, while, swayed by the same impulse, Mr. Arthur Lynch half rose to his feet and waved his handkerchief. Strange to say, these ebullitions of feeling were succeeded by an obvious sense of disappointment[14] on the Opposition benches," as Grey went on to say that while France had

[13] See footnote on p. 66.

[14] The Opposition's determination for war was announced in the following letter from Mr. Bonar Law, its leader in the House of Commons, to Mr. Asquith on August 2, 1914.

Dear Mr. Asquith,

Lord Lansdowne and I feel it our duty to inform you that in our opinion, as well as in that of all the colleagues whom we have been able to consult, it would be fatal to the honour and security of the United Kingdom to hesitate in supporting France and Russia at the present juncture and we offer our unhesitating support to the Government in any measures they may consider necessary for that object.

Yours very truly,
A. BONAR LAW.

This letter is quoted by L. J. Maxse in an article "Retrospect and Reminiscence" in the *National Review* of August, 1918 and by Lord Loreburn in his book "How the War Came." Lord Loreburn comments on it. "Not a word in it, observe, about Belgium. To support France and Russia; that was the thing to be done."

been promised support, this was only in case French coasts in the Channel or North Sea were attacked. "Soon, however, the war feeling was revived. Faint Liberal and Labour cheers welcomed the disclosure of Germany's undertaking in return for a pledge of British neutrality not to attack the Northern coasts of France. 'I only heard this offer just before I came into the House,' Sir E. Grey observed, 'but it is far too narrow an engagement'—words promptly cheered to the echo by the Opposition." There was Belgium to be considered.[15] "From this point onwards, Sir E. Grey's tone became more and more determined, almost, as the Opposition seemed to assume, more and more warlike." All was still uncertain and force might still be avoided. "But at any moment, added Sir E. Grey, the necessity might arise, and in that event he promised the nation that by land as well as by sea we should be found ready." Redmond and Bonar Law pledged full support. "Some impatience was shown when Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, in his firm yet temperate manner, was giving voice to the determination of the Labour Party to have no part in a policy of war, and a little later other critics of the Ministerial position were threatened for a moment with closure by clamour. Happily, this tendency to intolerance soon wore off, and for the rest of the night the house listened

[15] On August 1st, Prince Lichnowsky, German Ambassador in London, asked Sir E. Grey whether if Germany gave a promise not to violate Belgium's neutrality, England would remain neutral. Grey refused that offer and further refused to formulate the conditions upon which England would remain neutral. See Grey's letter to Sir E. Goschen, British Ambassador in Berlin, British Blue Book, No. 123. Grey in his memoirs admits that he was personally responsible for bringing England into the war and says that he would have resigned if he had not done so whether Belgium had been invaded or not.

Germany's infringement of Belgium's neutrality can in no sense have been a surprise to the Entente statesmen. In 1911, Isvolski, the Russian Minister in Paris, writing to Sazonov, the Russian Foreign Minister, states: "The conclusion has long been reached here that in the event of a fresh Franco-German war Germany must in any case and without question infringe Belgian neutrality." The text of this letter suggests that the French had made counter-dispositions in anticipation of German action. (See document No. 12 in the Isvolski documents referred to in footnote on p. 67.)

in sombre stillness to speech after speech from the Liberal benches, all, with scarcely an exception, severely critical of the Foreign Minister's arguments and actions." "Even at this hour it was asked, 'Why not negotiate with Germany on the basis of the terms suggested in her offer?' . . . Significantly enough the Opposition held entirely aloof from the general discussion. Challenged by a Ministerialist to say whether this was because they were at last satisfied with the Government, those who had remained to hear the debate responded with a cheer of ominous assent."

The Parliamentary correspondent of the *Daily News* (P.W.W.) wrote an account of the scene which, even more vividly than the above, reflects the Liberal temper at that moment.

"The scene of a century—world drama sweeping away parties, policies, measures. Outside the Palace great restless crowds—what a Bank Holiday for them—cheering Ministers, seizing the papers as issued, the democracy with war in prospect. What, one asked oneself, will be the temper of that democracy when war is over?

"Within the usual assemblage of statesmen, the Russian Ambassador sits, pale and weary, in the gallery. There are chairs on the floor recalling Gladstone days. No more questions. Let all be postponed. Enter Sir E. Grey, with two red dispatch boxes, well used and worn. Then a cheer—fierce and terrible in its significance—a war cheer for Mr. Churchill, welcomed thus by the Tories. For him, what a moment! Did he think of his ancestor, Marlborough? His face was flushed, haggard, moody. For an hour he sat, twisting paper, as is his custom, while he listened.

"Another cheer, not so fierce, for the Prime Minister.

"Then the Moratorium Bill was quickly passed through all its stages . . . and the way was clear for Sir E. Grey's momentous declaration. Sir Edward Grey, now among the few men of history forever to be mentioned, rises. His face extraordinarily pale; a curious redness, of nights without sleep, of much reading, much writing, about his eyes. An ominous set look about his mouth; utter restraint; but also a certain

terrible indignation that the whole world should be out of joint.

"For an hour he spoke, spoke as few men in the annals of history have the chance of speaking—clearly, with the force of intense conviction, the note of resolute anger which betrayed the overwhelming disappointment of the peacemaker whose utmost efforts have failed.

"That was his opening—'We have consistently worked with a single mind to preserve peace.' 'We have no difficulty in proving it'—witness the Balkan crisis, but in this case 'little time' was allowed; Austria 'showed a disposition to force things rapidly to an issue at great risk to peace.' 'And the result is'—his voice dropped—'that the policy of peace has failed.'

" 'I will not say,' he continued, 'where the blame seems to us to lie—I will deal only with British interests—with British honour'—a great Tory cheer—'with British obligations; deal with these things free from passion.' (A long Liberal cheer.) Papers would be published as to negotiations last week. No secret engagement to support France would be sprung upon the House. Two diplomatic groups there were —ours and an Entente, not an Alliance, and in 1908, during the Bosnian crisis, M. Isvolsky was told in London that Great Britain would not give Russia 'more than diplomatic support.' 'There was no promise,' said Sir E. Grey, 'till yesterday, not till yesterday.'

"This—the first hint.

"In 1906, at the Algeciras crisis, Sir E. Grey promised France nothing, but said that 'public opinion would rally to France if she were attacked as a result of the agreement with Great Britain over Morocco.' But it was 'no promise.' Then it was that the French Ambassador urged that naval and military conversations should be authorised so that this kind of support should be effective. Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman agreed, as did Lord (then Mr.) Haldane and Mr. Asquith. But there was a definite understanding that it left our hands free, which understanding was put into writing by Sir E. Grey in a letter to the French Ambassador, dated

Nov. 22, 1912. This letter he read. 'It is,' said he, 'our starting point.' So to the present situation—France. She does not desire war; her alliance brings her in. 'We don't know the terms of that alliance, and have only to consider what the situation requires of us.'

"'There is our long-standing friendship with France'—a shout from Labour, and from the allies of Labour in this matter, 'and with Germany.'

"It was the first note of dissent. Sir E. Grey's voice rose.

"'Let every man look into his own heart,' he cried. 'Think—France is not the aggressor. Is a foreign fleet to be allowed to enter the English channel? Are her north and west coasts to be battered and bombarded—these coasts which are undefended because her fleets are keeping open the trades routes of the Mediterranean for our commerce? Is it to be done, under the sight of our eyes, we with our arms folded?'

"A cheer rent the air.

"'A European conflagration—who will set bounds to it? What about our vital interests, if Italy, now neutral because she regards the war as aggressive—(cheers)—changes her attitude?'

"'Yesterday, we let France know at once'—(great cheering)—'that we should not allow her north and west coasts to be attacked.' 'This is not a declaration of war.' (Liberal cheers.) 'It means no aggressive action.' 'If Germany agrees not so to use her fleet'—a very momentous passage this—'should we give a pledge of neutrality?'

"The Labour cheers were loud and long. Was it—was it really neutrality after all? Down came the hand on the box; down went the flickering hopes.

"'It is far too narrow an engagement for us.'

"The neutrality of Belgium had been threatened with an ultimatum. The King of Belgium had appealed to the British people. A question had been addressed to Germany.

"Here—a disclosure. Last week France agreed to respect Belgian neutrality. The same question was put to Germany. What answer the Foreign Minister? He 'must consult the Emperor and the Chancellor.' Question repeated; most im-

portant, indeed urgent. What answer then? It would 'disclose part of the plan of campaign against France?'

"At this there was a groan of astonishment at Germany's cynical militarism. Passion, alas, rising—rising.

" 'Had not Gladstone described the destruction of Belgium as 'the direst crime?' So then it was a case of the independence of Belgium—of Holland—of Denmark—of France herself, it might be, if France 'were beaten to her knees.' 'If in a crisis like this—we run away'—the war cheers rent the air—'our respect is gone,' so—mobilise fleet, done already; mobilise army, also done; but hold back army for a while lest India be troubled and in the meantime say to Europe:

" 'Our one bright spot in a terrible situation is Ireland.'

"This the speech—all the rest peroration: cool, clear-phrased, rousing to men of usual blood.

"Nothing was left for Mr. Bonar Law. If it be war, then —'no alternative.' He agreed that Ireland was 'the one bright spot' but there was another—the British dominions beyond the seas. Mr. Redmond rises, also Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. Loud cries for 'Redmond.' All the Tories want 'Redmond.' Ulster shouts for 'Redmond.'

" 'Things are changed,' said Mr. Redmond. 'History is repeating itself. In the American war, Catholic and Protestant volunteers joined to help you. In your dire necessity, withdraw your troops from Ireland. The Nationalist and the Ulster volunteers will combine to defend her shores.'

"Great enthusiasm for 'Redmond' and Irish Nationalist Volunteers.

"So to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. Real courage there, the courage to stand alone. 'Your speech,' said he to Sir E. Grey, 'will echo in history, but you are wrong. If the country were in danger I would be with you. I am not persuaded. Honour? No such crime is committed without an appeal to honour. It was so with the Crimean war, with the South African war.' (Ironical Tory cheers.) 'And what about Russia? Why no mention of Russia?' The country should thus remain neutral

at least until it were clearly shown that the little nations were really imperilled.

Liberal Criticism.

"Seven o'clock. Loud cries of 'Black Rod.' So the Lords have already passed our 'Non-collection of Debts Bill' and Royalty assents. The usual processions go back and forth—how persistent their forms—and then Sir E. Grey states to the House evening paper news, already known—Belgium refuses German violation on any terms. Great cheers for Sir E. Grey; great cheers for Belgium. Yet it is not yet quite war—only 'the gravest consideration.'

"With the moment flames forth eloquence—the unquenchable within the average man. Never so spoke Mr. Philip Morell (*sic*)—as well as Sir E. Grey himself—how he overawed the House, recalling Bright and his 'foul fetish of the Balance of Power'; most noble because most brave assertion for peace.

"Mr. Wedgwood next; he also was heard with profound misgivings by the Tories. 'Seventy thousand people in the potteries!' he cried, 'those are my constituents. The poor will raid the country, they will take food.' War! Yes—it is war to-day; to-morrow—Revolution.'

"How they listened—those Tories. Not so pleasant this war as it was in the afternoon.

Not A People's War

"The voice of Quakerism—this next—Mr. Edmond Harvey, a wonderfully impressive, because so just, so calm a speech. 'No people's war,' said he, 'a war of men in high places—bureaucrats.' Let not the Foreign Secretary lose patience, strive on for an arrangement with Germany; which plea was echoed by Sir Albert Spicer and Mr. Rowntree.

"Tories now very silent—very thoughtful; this Quakerism, most difficult to shout down; something behind it which cannot be gainsaid. 'You relieve the Stock Exchange,' said Mr. Keir Hardie. 'What about starving children? An answer, please.'

"Mr. Lloyd George promising shipping insurance statement to-morrow, answers that our Bill of to-day helps not only Stock Exchange, but all trades—all employments, yet nothing as yet about starving children.

"Once more—Arthur Ponsonby's speech, impressive as doom, never such 'I told you so' for a hundred years. 'A tragic moment,' says he, 'war with a light heart.' (Cheers.) 'War fever begins. I saw half-drunken youths shouting for it last night. And you call that—patriotism.'

"What cost—terrible emphasis! The House, hostile, sat dumbfounded. No man so dumbfounded as the patriots.

" 'And when I heard the Foreign Secretary's speech, I thought it was in keeping with the scenes I witnessed.' "

" 'The issue,' cried Mr. Pringle, 'is between the forces of Blood and Iron and the public law of Europe.'

Balfourian Taunt.

" 'Dregs and lees of the debate,' was Mr. Balfour's bitterly amazing description of the peace speeches. 'They do not represent the opinion of the House and country.' His point was that the proper opportunity of debate would be the Vote on Account. Colonel Seely (who approves of the Government's policy) at once intervened to tell Mr. Balfour that the speeches he so contemptuously described were far from being 'irresponsible'—a rebuke loudly interrupted by the Jingo party.

"Mr. Balfour's astounding description of pleas for the poor in time of war will do more to consolidate the working classes against the governing classes, more to arouse a dangerous discontent than any half-dozen words uttered at any time in the Imperial Parliament."

The *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily News* were unconvinced by Sir E. Grey's statement. The former wrote in its leader of August 4: "If and when England joins in the war it will be too late to discuss its policy. Meanwhile we hold it to be a patriotic duty for all good citizens to oppose to the utmost the participation of this country in the greatest crime of our time. Sir E. Grey's speech last night, for all

its appearance of candour, was not fair, either to the House of Commons or to the country. It showed that for years he has been keeping back the whole truth and telling just enough to lull into a false sense of security, not enough to enable the country to form a reasoned judgment on the current of our policy. This long course of disloyalty to popular rights . . . is not atoned for by the deathbed confession of last night. It is a mockery to throw on the House of Commons the responsibility of deciding at a moment's notice and in circumstances of great excitement on a policy that has been maturing for years. . . . A minority did protest, and nobly, against the incompetence and secretiveness in the conduct of our foreign affairs, which now threatens to wreck the moral and material progress of half a century." The leader proceeded to urge all the forces for peace to go on exerting themselves to the utmost right up to the last. "We do not defend German, or rather Prussian military policy. It is in our opinion profoundly mistaken, though we have not the heart to achieve eloquence in denouncing what men do who are fighting against tremendous odds for very life. But the miscalculations of the German General Staff of Germany's interests, however great, would not justify the miscalculations by British Ministers of British interests. Nor shall we repair the violation of Belgian neutrality by violating the neutrality of England." "The war, if it comes, will not be due to the terms of the Entente with France. There is, as Sir E. Grey acknowledged, a great difference between this crisis and that which arose over Agadir in 1911. Then it was possible to say that if we were not textually bound to support France she had got into her trouble as a sequel (not, we think, as a consequence) of her agreement with us over Morocco, and we were therefore bound in honour. But this quarrel has nothing to do with any subject ever contemplated in the political understanding with France. The Entente would be absolutely irrelevant to the whole question of our participation in this war but for two sets of facts, of which we heard for the first time last night. It appears that as long ago as 1906 Sir E. Grey consented to conversations between English and

French naval and military men as to the best means towards the co-operation between the two countries which the terms of the Entente envisaged under certain circumstances. These conversations have been going on ever since; they were kept from the knowledge of the House of Commons, but, as we now know, revealed to Tory journalists in London and Paris.[15] Sir E. Grey reconciled this partial secrecy with his conscience by making the stipulation that they were not to commit us to any policy which the country might not support. They have, however, had this effect, that they have been so conducted as to give France the right to ask us exactly what we mean to do in the event of war, not merely over the subjects covered by the Entente, but apparently over any subject. The extreme form which these conversations took was in relation to the Mediterranean. As a consequence of her friendship with us, France transferred her main fleet to the Mediterranean, and Sir E. Grey appears to imply that this was done for our benefit. Sir E. Grey argues that that act gave France the right to ask us whether we would defend her Atlantic and Channel coasts. It would only do so if the transfer were made on that understanding; but supposing it did, what then? The most that would follow is that in the absence of the French fleet we might be under some obligation to defend the northern and western coasts of France. That obligation Germany is quite prepared to respect. She has offered not to attack these coasts or the coasts of Belgium and Holland. That, says Sir E. Grey, is not enough—he must have a promise to respect all the coasts of France. His reasons are extraordinary. If the French fleet comes north, he says, and if Italy does not remain neutral, we shall be in great difficulties in the Mediterranean. The defence of the French coast line in the Mediterranean then is the sole cause for any breach of our neutrality, so far as the Entente is concerned. That is to say, if we fight for France we shall fight for France's right to send her ships north and against Germany's right to send her ships to the Mediterranean. Is is rational? Can it be deduced, we will not say from the terms

[15] See footnote on p. 66.

of the Entente, but from the account of secret conversations which was given yesterday, can it be reconciled with any reasonable view of British interests? It cannot. Even from the point of view of France we should have thought that a guarantee of her northern and western coasts from attack gave her abundant cause for gratitude to the Entente.

There remains the question of the neutrality of Belgium. Sir E. Grey is prepared to go to war for this object and he quotes the opinion of Gladstone in support. But had Gladstone really thought that it was in our interests always and under all circumstances to go to the support of Belgium in defence of her neutrality, why did he so carefully restrict our obligation under the Treaty of 1870 to the duration of the war between Germany and France and a year after? Was not that an admission that the maintenance of Belgium's neutrality was not a question of honour—the obligations of honour are immutable—but was one which might change with changing conditions? We can attach no other interpretation to it. The question of the integrity of Belgium is one thing: its neutrality is quite another. We shall not easily be convinced, even if the integrity of Belgium be a British interest for which we ought to go to war, that the sacrosanctity of Belgian soil from the passage of an invader is worth the sacrifice of so much that mattered so much more to Englishmen. And in that opinion we are fortified by the view of Lord Derby, who held in the case of Luxemburg, in which our treaty obligations are precisely the same, that there was no obligation on us in honour or in law to intervene by force. Why should we be more Belgian than the Belgians in this matter? They are negotiating with Germany. Has Sir E. Grey closed the door to negotiations on this subject? We refuse to believe it and therefore we still refuse to give up hope that we shall yet succeed in maintaining our neutrality."

In this issue of the *Manchester Guardian* (August 4) there were special articles entitled "The German Offer; Germany and Belgian Neutrality; The Neutrality of Belgium: What the Treaties Say." A second leader headed "Sir Ed-

ward Grey's Strange Blunder," dealt with Sir E. Grey's remark: "If we are engaged in war we shall suffer but little more than we shall suffer even if we stand aside";[16] another article "The Nerves of Parliament," vividly recalls the atmosphere of the day preceding the declaration of war. A study of this and of the speeches at the previous night's debate gives the strongest possible impression that in the House of Commons the overwhelming impulse, the instinctive rush was emphatically for war. The strong surface emotion was to help France, but the fierce underlying motive was the determination to fight Germany.

Quite possibly the House of Commons was, even in that moment, not really representative of feelings in the country which, though worked up from inertia to the pitch, at least of "accepting the inevitable," was yet, judging from personal recollections, some way from a mood which hailed the declaration of war upon Germany "with a deep-throated cheer." Indeed, *Truth*, writing of the atmosphere of the House of Commons at this time, spoke of the members who protested against the Government's policy as "men who will form a Government one of these days when the front benches and their coalition have been swept into the oblivion that so often engulfs statesmen who, however innocently, go to war." . . . "Let us not sleep too soundly at nights," *Truth* continued, "the first mutterings of a revolutionary movement —organised, utterly sincere, and based upon fundamental social facts—are already heard in the House of Commons, and no one knows it more assuredly, from the face of him, than Mr. Lloyd George. If John Burns goes from the Cabinet let maffickers beware."

John Burns did go from the Cabinet, with Lord Morley, but their exit passed almost unnoticed in the revolution of feeling which swept over the country upon its entrance into the state of war.

The protests raised by the *Manchester Guardian* were supported to the full by the *Daily News* and the *Nation*. Even the *Westminster Gazette*, generally regarded as a Govern-

[16] See footnote on p. 15.

ment organ, denied that we were under any obligations to take part in war. "There are no unpublished agreements," it declared on August 1, "which will restrict or hamper the freedom of the Government or Parliament to decide whether or not Great Britain should participate in a war. That, announced to all the world last year,[17] secures us the free hand and sweeps away the various theories and hypotheses which assume us to be bound by engagements which it would be dishonourable to break." On August 3rd, it admitted that there was nothing in the treaty guaranteeing the independence of Belgium which required us to make the invasion of territory by another of the guarantors a *casus belli*. It added, however, and here it was at variance with the independent Liberal press, that there were certain possible developments of a struggle between Germany and France which would involve us in war on account of vital interests. (August 1 and August 3.) Its accordance with the *Times* was brought out more clearly on August 4, when it declared that "the deepest of our instincts," "the fundamental governing condition of our island policy" forbade that "a crowd of English holiday seekers on the leas at Folkestone" "should watch unconcernedly while German battleships threw shells at Boulogne." There was, therefore, no substantial disagreement between the *Westminster Gazette* and the Conservative Press. They were united, as the Government and Opposition were united, on the question of vital interest. The difference was that the Conservative Press had no hesitation from the first in announcing which way vital interest pointed and, on the whole, was less concerned than the *Westminster Gazette* and Sir Edward Grey were to emphasise that the Government and people of Great Britain were free to act as they chose. Nevertheless, the *Times* had also subscribed to this essentially democratic doctrine; in its leading article of July 30th, while declaring that there was but one course open for the country to pursue, it proceeded to reserve "the most

[17] See Mr. Asquith's statement, March 24, 1913.

complete liberty of action'' for the nation and the Government.[18]

The question of vital interest was that which fundamentally separated staunch Liberals from the Government and its adherents. That is seen in the criticism of Sir E. Grey's speech which revealed the question of obligation as less crucial than Liberals had believed, because, though ''free,'' vital interests obliged us to act as if we were bound. The *Manchester Guardian's* leader upon that speech has already been quoted. The *Daily News,* after criticising Sir E. Grey's statement that as far as economic considerations went, there would be no appreciable difference between the loss we should suffer if we remained neutral and the loss we should suffer by entering the war, and repeating its previously stated opinion that we were not bound to defend Belgian neutrality by force of arms (August 3) said (August 5, 1914):

''The real argument put forward by Sir E. Grey is that of our interests. He declared that our vital interests were bound up with the neutrality of Belgium, and he drew a picture of all the neutral states of Northern Europe being absorbed by Germany. The picture does not persuade, because we see no probability of its ever representing the facts, and while Sir E. Grey asserted our vital interests in Belgian neutrality he did not prove it, and with infinite regret we must confess ourselves unconvinced.'' The following day, after war had been declared, it repeated this assurance of lack of conviction. *''The time is past,''* it said, *''when the effort to prevent this country launching into the dreadful conflict could be of use. We place on record our conviction that it was possible and that it would have been just and prudent and statesmanlike for England to have remained neutral. We shall record that a mistaken course of foreign policy, pursued over ten years, has led us to the terrible conflict in which we are now engaged. We believe that the conviction that that policy was a mistake will steadily conquer the minds of the English people and that they will one*

[18] See the *Times,* July 30, 1914, p. 19 of this book.

day come to the resolution that it is an error which must not be repeated. With that we have said our last word of controversy and leave the judgment to the future.''

''Being in, . . . we must win.''

It is with the conflict between the criticism recorded in this article and its conclusion, ''Being in, we must win,'' that the next chapter will deal.

3

THE HOLY WAR

It is largely due to the Liberal papers that the war came to be so fraught with higher than material aims. Without Liberal opinion the war would never have been a holy war. Its psychology, in consequence, would have been comparatively simple and straightforward. If the *Morning Post* had represented the opinions of all in the country, the war would have been an ordinary, old-fashioned kind of war, devoid of spiritual aims. If the *Times* had been the sole spokesman, it might have contented itself with asserting the identity between our vital interests and the cause of right and honour, an identity which has been proclaimed in previous wars, though not always confirmed by posterity. But to the Liberal press belongs the honour of being the cradle of this war's holiness. It was the Liberal aversion to war, the extreme Liberals' dissatisfaction with the vital interest argument, combined with their final submission to the fact of war, which made this war different from previous ones and consecrated it from the outset as a war on behalf of civilisation.

The birth of the Holy War was in this wise. The very notion of commitment to war by obligation or understanding was, as the previous chapter has shown, shocking to Liberal consciences. The Liberals denied that England was under any obligation whatsoever to intervene other than diplomatically in the conflict. They insisted that neither honour nor vital interest was at stake in the matter of the neutrality of Belgium. The *Daily News* said on August 3: "We are under no obligation to defend against all and sundry the neutrality of Belgium by force of arms, and if there is a political case

for doing so it has not yet been presented nor do we believe it can be made out." On August 4 it concluded its criticism of Sir Edward Grey's statement with the words: "The picture does not persuade . . . he did not prove it (*i.e.*, our vital interest in the neutrality) and with infinite regret we must confess ourselves unconvinced." The following day, upon the declaration of war, appeared its finally recorded conviction that "a mistaken course of foreign policy, pursued over ten years . . . has led to the terrible conflict in which we are now engaged," and belief that this conviction would one day conquer the minds of the English people, accompanied by the announcement: *"With that we have said our last word of controversy. . . . Being in, we must win."*

The acceptance of a war for no other reason than that of "being in" it is a state of mind which is intolerable to reasoning men. A war, so abhorrent to Liberals, against every apparent step towards which they had protested during the previous ten years, the need of entering which they denied until they found themselves "in" it, was bound to reflect, on its psychological side, the conflict which such a state of mind really is. The conflict was between abhorrence and acceptance of the war, between the feeling of not having wanted the war, of having worked sincerely to prevent it, in short the feeling of complete innocence of intention to bring it about, and the feeling expressed in the sentence: "Being in, we must win." Win what? The final struggle brought about by "a mistaken course of foreign policy pursued over ten years?" The downthrow of the German people? *"No,"* protested A.G.G. in the *Daily News* (August 8), *"this is not a war of peoples, but of despots and diplomatists. It is, we may hope, the last supreme struggle of the old dispensation against the new. Let us be quite clear in our minds as to the real enemy. We have no quarrel with the German people. . . . No, it is not the people with whom we are at war. It is the tyranny which has held them in its vice, the tyranny of personal government armed with a mailed fist, the tyranny of a despotic rule, countersigned by Krupps. . . . In this war we are engaged in fighting for the emancipation of Germany*

as well as for the liberties of Europe." This was written only four days after the outbreak of war, and is remarkable for showing, at that early date, the ideal war aims in almost as perfect a state of development as that afterwards reached, even in the speeches of President Wilson. Many similar passages could be quoted showing that these aims were born fully fledged, and it needs no profound knowledge of human psychology to see that they were the offspring of a forced union between abhorrence of, and submission to, the war.

It is significant that the Liberal papers were the first in the field for "the war to end war." The campaign was opened as early as August 7, in the *Daily Chronicle,* by that great prophet and Utopia planner, Mr. H. G. Wells. "Every sword that is drawn against Germany is a sword drawn for peace," he proclaimed. "That trampling, drilling foolery in the heart of Europe that has arrested civilisation and darkened the hopes of mankind for forty years, German Imperialism, German militarism, has struck its inevitable blow. The victory of Germany will mean the permanent enthronement of the War God over all human affairs. The defeat of Germany may open the way to disarmament and peace throughout the earth. To those who love peace there can be no other hope in the present conflict than the defeat, the utter discrediting of the German legend, the ending for good and all of the blood and iron superstition of Krupp, flag-wagging Teutonic Kiplingism, and all that criminal sham efficiency that centres in Berlin. Never was war so righteous as war against Germany now. Never has any state in the world so clamoured for punishment. . . . That is why I, with my declared horror of war, have not signed any of these 'stop the war' appeals and declarations that have appeared in the last few days."

"The Sword of Peace" [1] having been thus drawn by such an avowed pacifist, others, even those who, unlike Mr. Wells, had not been far-sighted enough to refrain from signing "stop the war" appeals and declarations, hastened to enlist under his banner. The next day, being Saturday (August 8), A.G.G., of the *Daily News,* threw out his weekly beam

[1] The title of Mr. Wells's article in the "Daily Chronicle," August 7.

of light upon the general darkness and made the declaration already quoted, beginning, "This is not a war of peoples but of despots and diplomatists." The article, which was entitled "War and the Spirit of the Nation," dwelt on the great change that had come over people in the last few days, the vanishing of the Irish question, the miraculous disappearance of controversy in the House of Commons. A.G.G. found such confidence everywhere "confidence quite free from boastfulness or jingoism, touched rather with sadness at the wickedness and misery of this measureless crime, but resolved at whatever cost to meet and overthrow the menace of militarism." "There is no 'à Berlin' bombast this time, only the feeling that some power of darkness has thrown this down upon the world and that it must be faced without fear and without boasting." Of course, A.G.G. reminded his readers, it was early yet to talk, and the real trial was to come. But meanwhile, he thought, it was not a bad thing to try and see beyond the tempest. He told the story of a "sweet old lady" whose faith enabled her to greet the news of the declaration of war with an upward look and the words "God reigns." It was a difficult saying at that moment to believe, but if we took "long views" (such as the *Daily News* was so good at taking), room might be found for the old lady's faith. "The nations of Europe have groaned under the tyranny of armaments and have groaned in vain. Perhaps some such vast cataclysm as this was necessary to release the world from the monstrous bondage of the past. We have seen in these days, as by a flash of lightning, the profound truth that credit and Krupps, the rule of force and the reign of civilisation cannot co-exist. We may have armaments or we may have credit, but we cannot have both. The world may be civilised or the world may be savage, but it cannot be both. Barbarism, we may hope, is fighting its last battle. It is the biggest battle of all, but that is the way of things. The swollen monster of armaments should collapse with its own weight. Civilisation will never tolerate the erection of his altar again. Then the world will be free."

In the following week's *Daily News* appeared Professor

Kettle's article, "Europe Against the Barbarians: Some Things at Stake." Professor Kettle began by doubting whether any imagination was large enough to contain the issues of the war. Servia's function had, he said, been merely "that of an electric button which discharges the great guns of a fortress." The stake for which we were playing was "as simple as it was colossal." It was Europe against the barbarians. The "big blonde beast" had stepped from the pages of Nietzsche out on to the plains about Liège. Brought suddenly to think of it, Professor Kettle realised "the corruption of moral standards for which Germany in our time has been responsible." Since Schopenhauer nothing had come from Germany except the gospel of domination. "And now we suddenly understand that the Immoralists meant what they said. We were reading, not as we thought, a string of drawing-room paradoxes, but the advance proof sheets of a veritable Bullies' Bible. The General Bernhardis who have been teaching Germany to desire war, to provoke it, to regard it as a creative and not a destructive act, to accept it as merely the inevitable prologue to German domination, have proved to be not only brutal but formidable. Since Belgium and its protecting treaty barred the way, both simply had to go. 'Nothing is true, everything is permitted to the strong.' Afterwards, it will be the turn of the others. And at the end of the process, a monster, gorged with blood and with the torn limbs of civilisation, is to lie sprawled all over Central Europe, while some new metaphysician from Berlin booms heavily into his self-intoxicated brain some new fable of pre-ordination."

On August 14, Mr. Wells, who had made his début as a crusader in the *Daily Chronicle*, came on to the platform of the *Daily News*. "I find myself enthusiastic for this war against German militarism," were the opening words of his article, "The War to End War"; and the genuineness of his enthusiasm is attested by the following passage, under the subheading, "A Fight to a Finish":

"Into this war we have gone with clean hands, to end the reign of brutal and artful internationalism for ever.

Our hearts are heavy at the task before us, but our intention is grim. We mean to conquer. We are prepared for every disaster, for intolerable stresses, for bankruptcy, for hunger, for everything but defeat. Now that we have begun to fight, we will fight, if needful, until the children die of famine in our homes, though every ship we have is at the bottom of the sea. We mean to fight this war to its very finish and that finish we are absolutely resolved must be the end of Kraftism in the world. And we will come out of this war with hands as clean as they are now, unstained by any dirty tricks in field or council chamber, neutralities respected and treaties kept. Then we will reckon with Kraft [2] and with his friends and supporters, the private dealers in armaments, and with all this monstrous stupid brood of villainy that has brought this catastrophe upon the world."

A few days later, a note of distrust in Mr. Wells's Utopianism was sounded in a letter from Lord Eversley to the *Daily News* (August 20), doubting the wisdom of defining the issues of the war as "The Sword of Peace" and "The War to End War," had defined them. Among other things, Mr. Wells had said: "What we are fighting for is a new map of Europe if we are fighting for anything at all." "A war commenced with such objects," remarked Lord Eversley, "would necessarily be a very long one; it would be more likely to end in the increase of militancy and imperialism than in the reduction of those evils." It did not seem to be in the interest of England, he suggested, "to roam about the continent reforming its map and tilting against militarism in the manner suggested." He thought that it was enough for the moment to confine our aims to the freeing of Belgium.

Mr. Wells replied immediately. (August 21.) Lord Eversley's letter, he said, expressed just that attitude of mind he was most anxious to guard against; an attitude "most likely to render Liberalism feeble and futile at this junc-

[2] Mr. Wells's fancy prompted the choice of the name "Maximilian Kraft" for the particular brand of vile cunning his article was indicting. "Kraft," however, is German for "strength," and should not be confused with the English word "crafty."

ture." Lord Eversley, he supposed, looked upon him as "a presumptuous person rushing in with ideas where great statesmen feared to tread." But surely, Mr. Wells exclaimed, Liberalism wasn't going to let this tremendous opportunity slip for setting the world to rights. He implored Liberals not to let "this sort of blank-mindedness, this pseudo-sage intellectual laziness, this easy dread of prematurity," carry them into a merely passive position. Things were on the move as for a century they might never be again. A sane settlement of Europe might wipe out a hundred festering wrongs, reduce the reasons for armaments to a minimum, open a new and cleaner page in the history of civilisation. Lord Eversley was silent from that day; Mr. Wells, it is hardly necessary to say, was not. He had already written at great length upon the "Opportunity for Liberalism" in the previous week's *Nation*. (August 15.) There it was manifest to Mr. Wells that "in a year or so" the world of men was going to alter more than it had ever altered since history began. One had only, he said, to think of the "mere geographical dislocation." There was "scarcely a country in Europe" that would not emerge from the struggle "with entirely fresh frontiers." Who could doubt that there would have to be social reconstruction? Mr. Wells saw famine coming "plainly," in France, Germany and Russia. Did anyone suppose that the "sham efficient Germans" had fully worked out the care and feeding of the madly distended hosts they had hurled at France? Did anyone imagine their sanitary arrangements would be perfect? Of course not, said Mr. Wells, there would be pestilence! "Prussian Germany had committed the business to Gott."[3] "If Gott failed Germany," Mr. Wells did not believe that Germany would have the remotest idea what to do next. In the meantime, one was suddenly confronted by "undreamt of instabilities." The frontier lines of Europe

[3] The German word for "God." Many people, besides Mr. Wells, find it strange, if not rather ludicrous and contemptible, that the German people do not speak English. *cf.* Taine's story of the English lady, arriving in Paris, who wrote home, "There are a great many foreigners here."

wavered under one's eyes. It was the same in little things as in great. Mr. Wells's own Reform Club, which, he said, had been a cheerful and refreshing trickle of gold to him for years now yielded him reluctantly for his cheque two inartistic pound notes. His other club would not cash cheques at all. These small jolts in his private life were symbolical to him of the great upheaval without. "Society, as we knew it a year ago, has already broken up . . . institutions and conventions crumble . . ." He, Mr. Wells, was only just able to run as hard as he could by the side of the marching facts, pointing to them. In the swirl ahead he foresaw that Will and Ideas would play a large part. It was a time of "incalculable plasticity." "It is the supreme opportunity, the test or condemnation of constructive Liberal thought in the world." And what, asked Mr. Wells, did Liberalism mean to do? Mere carping criticism would be of no use. Liberals must *act!* Else "peace may come to Europe this winter as swiftly and as disastrously as the war. . . ."

"What are the intentions of Liberalism? What will be the contribution of Liberalism?" he demanded. "One poor Liberal, I perceive," said Mr. Wells, mockingly, "is possessed to the exclusion of every other consideration, that we were not legally bound to fight for Belgium. A pretty point, but a petty one. Liberalism is something greater than unfavourable comment on the deeds of active men. *Let us set about defining our intentions. Let us borrow a little from the rash vigour of the types that have contrived this disaster. Let us make a truce of our finer feelings and control our dissentient passions. Let us redraw the map of Europe boldly, as we mean it to be redrawn, and let us replan society as we mean it to be constructed.* Now is the opportunity to do fundamental things that will otherwise not get done for hundreds of years. If Liberals throughout the world—and in this matter the Liberalism of America is a stupendous possibility—will insist upon a World Conference at the end of this conflict, if they refuse all partial settlements and merely European solutions, they may redraw every frontier, they may reduce a thousand chafing conflicts of race and

language and government to a minimum and set up a Peace League that will control the globe. The world will be ripe for it. And the world will be ripe, too, for the banishment of the private industry in armaments, and all the vast corruption that entails, from the earth for ever. It is possible now to make an end of Kruppism. It may never be possible again. Henceforth let us say weapons must be made by the State and only by the State; there must be no more private profit in blood. That is the second great possibility for Liberalism, linked to the first. And thirdly, we may turn our present social necessities to the most enduring social reorganisation; with an absolute minimum of effort now we may help to set going methods and machinery that will put the feeding and housing of the population and the administration of the land out of the reach of private greed and selfishness for ever."

Mr. Wells did not speak to deaf ears. On the day after his rebuke to Lord Eversley, A.G.G. chose the historic phrase, "Roll up that map" for the title of his weekly message in the *Daily News* (August 22). The article echoed Mr. Wells' feelings that the whole map of Europe was in dissolution, and said that we could only guess what the new map that would record the result of the war would be like. After guessing that if Germany won "Germany will bestride Europe from Antwerp to Constantinople and the outlying peninsulas, Scandinavian, Iberian, Italian, will be feudatories of the War Lord," A.G.G. proceeded to hazard a few conjectures as to what would follow British victory.

"One thing is certain. Alsace and Lorraine will be restored to France."

The mention of Alsace-Lorraine suggested a very necessary warning. "We must beware that Germany has no Alsace-Lorraine to keep alive the flame of revenge." . . . "Our war is with the Kaiser and Kaiserism; let us destroy them, but do not let us aim at destroying Germany." Germany ought to be left to settle her own internal future. A.G.G. threw out another guess as to what that would be. "The fabric that Bismarck created with blood and iron will

probably fall to ruins as the creations of blood and iron have always fallen. The Hohenzollerns, we may hope, will join the rubbish heap of the Bourbons and the Napoleons, and Bavaria will throw off the detested domination of Prussia. . . . Prussia itself will be emancipated from the tyranny of the junkers and militarists." Again came a reminder concerning our own junkers and militarists: "We must be careful that in destroying junkerism in Germany we do not put it into the saddle in England."

"But let us return to the map of Europe," A.G.G. continued, marking his return by the sub-heading, 'Exit Austria.' "We shall look in vain for the Dual Empire." In its place we might see Austria, "part of some German union," Hungary "independent" and the Slav south "incorporated in a greater Servia, which, united to Montenegro, will recover the racial and territorial homogeneity it lost to the Turks." "Italy, of course, would have the Southern Tyrol and the territory down to Trieste. That again would unite fragments of one race." With regard to Poland, A.G.G. evidently felt nervous. It was difficult, he thought, to feel quite safe about the Czar's promise to Poland. Still, we ought to hope for the best, "perhaps the influence of the Allies will go for something," and while we were hoping generally, "let's hope, too, that the Czar will give Home Rule to Finland." "Finally," said A.G.G., "there are the Balkans." "Russion influence will be dominant there, but we may, as a by-product of this war, reasonably look for a better spirit to prevail among the late belligerents. Servia, swollen by spoils from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and with a free access to the sea, could afford to be just to Bulgaria in Macedonia, and the old Balkan Alliance with perhaps Rumania added might be re-established under happier auspices. The chief fear is the latent trouble between Turkey and Greece. If Germany looks like winning, that trouble would develop, for Turkey has her eye on Berlin. This would mean the end of Turkey and unfortunately grave reactions would follow among the Mohammedan population in India. . . ." There were other disquieting possibilities—"travelling further East

the action of Japan in declaring war on Germany'' might have far-reaching consequences in the United States. A.G.G. reined in his guesses. ''That carries us too far afield. The map of Europe is enough for one article.''

Into the following week's *Nation* (August 29), Mr. Wells came rushing, with more ideas. His theme on this occasion was ''The War of the Mind.'' ''All the realities of this war are things of the mind,'' he wrote, breathlessly. ''This is a conflict of cultures and nothing else in the world. . . . We fight not to destroy a nation but a nest of evil ideas. We fight because a whole nation has become obsessed by pride, by the cant of cynicism and the vanity of violence, by the evil suggestion of such third-rate writers as Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, that they were a people of peculiar excellence destined to dominate the earth, by the base offer of advantage in cunning and treachery held out by such men as Delbruck and Bernhardi, by the theatricalism of the Kaiser and by two stirring songs about Deutschland and the Rhine. These things, interweaving with the tradesmen's activities of the armaments trust and the common vanity of unthinking men have been sufficient to release disaster. On the back of it all, spurring it on, are the idea-mongers, the base-spirited writing men, pretentious little professors in frocks, scribbling colonels. They are the idea. They pointed the way and whispered 'Go!' They ride the world now to catastrophe. It is as if God in a moment of wild humour had lent his whirlwinds for an outing to half a dozen fleas!''

''And the real task before mankind is quite beyond the business of the fighting line . . . The real task of mankind is to get better sense into the heads of these Germans, and therewith and thereby into the heads of humanity generally, and to end not simply a war, but the idea of war. What printing and writing and talking have done, printing and writing and talking can undo. . . . Our business is to kill ideas. The ultimate purpose of this war is propaganda, the destruction of certain beliefs and the creation of others. It is to this propaganda that reasonable men must address themselves. And when I write propaganda I do not for a moment mean

the propaganda with which the name of Mr. Norman Angell is associated; this great modern gospel that war does not pay. That is indeed the only decent and attractive thing that can still be said for war. Nothing that is really worth having in life does pay. . . . Love does not pay, art does not pay, happiness does not pay, honesty is not the best policy . . . what is the good of this huckster's argument? It revolts all honourable men. But war, whether it pays or not, is an atrociously ugly thing, cruel, destroying countless beauties." All nations hated it, said Mr. Wells, even the poor, deluded Germans, who were marching off "under their incompetent leaders to hardship and mutilations and death." "We have to clear the heads of the Germans," he wrote, and added, "and keep the heads of our own people clear about this war." "Particularly is there need to dissuade our people against the dream of profit-filching, the war against German Trade. We have to reiterate over and over again that we fight, resolved that at the end no nationality shall oppress any nationality or language again in Europe for ever." Mr. Wells urged a vigorous propaganda in all countries so that the great and gloriously disinterested character of the war might be recognised all over the world. "By means of a propaganda of books, newspaper articles, leaflets, tracts, in English, French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, Italian, Chinese and Japanese, we have to spread this idea, repeat this idea and impose upon this war the idea that this war must end war." "We have to create a wide common conception of a remapped and pacified Europe. . . ." Finally, Mr. Wells called upon the Church, which, in his opinion was neglecting its opportunities. "We look to the Church," he said, gravely; "Christianity is silent. Its universally present organisation speaks no coherent counsels. Its workers, for the most part, are buried in the loyal manufacture of flannel garments and an inordinate quantity of bed-socks for the wounded. It is an extraordinary thing to go now and look at one's parish church . . . and to reflect . . . that all over Europe there are such pulpits, such possibilities of gathering and saying, and that it gathers nothing and has nothing to say. Pacific,

patriotic sentiment it utters perhaps, but nothing that anyone can act upon, nothing to draw together, will and make an end . . . This European catastrophe is the tragedy of the weak though righteous Christian will. We begin to see that to be right and indolent, or right and scornfully silent, or right and abstinent from the conflict is to be wrong . . . There is no meaning in the Christianity of a Christian who is not now a propagandist for peace.[4] Who is not now also a politician. There is no faith in Liberalism that merely carps at the manner of our entanglement in a struggle that must alter all the world for ever. We need not only to call for Peace, but to seek and show and organise the way of Peace. One thinks of Governments and the Church and the Press, and then, turning about for some other source of mental control, we recall the organisations, the really quite opulent organisations, that are professedly devoted to the promotion of peace. There is no voice from The Hague. The so-called peace movement in our world has consumed money enough and service enough to be something better than a weak little grumble at the existence of war. What is this movement and its organisations doing now? Ninety-nine people in Europe out of every hundred are complaining of war now. It needs no specially endowed committees to do that. They preach to a converted world. The question is how to end it[5] and prevent its recurrence. But have these specially peace-seeking people ever sought for the secret springs of war, or looked into the powers that war for war, or troubled to learn how to grasp war and subdue it? All Germany is knit by the fighting spirit and armed beyond the rest of the world. Until the mind of Germany is changed there can be no safe peace on earth. But that, it seems, does not trouble the professional peace advo-

[4] Readers will not do Mr. Wells the injustice of supposing that he was urging the Church to adopt the commonplace pacifist attitude. By peace, of course, Mr. Wells meant war for peace.

[5] "It," i.e., war. Mr. Wells's use of "peace" and "war" is a little confusing, but can be met by remembering that by "peace" he meant the promotion of war and vice versa. The war was for peace, and to be pacific, in Mr. Wells's sense, was to be for war (not war for war, but war for peace).

cate, if only he may cry Peace and live somewhere in comfort, and with the comfortable sense of a superior dissent from the general emotion. How are we to gather together the wills and understandings of men for the tremendous necessities and opportunities of this time? Thought, speech, persuasion, an incessant appeal for clear intentions, clear statement for the dispelling of suspicion and the abandonment of secrecy and trickery, there is work for every man who writes or talks. . . .

"This monstrous conflict in Europe . . . it is all of it real only in the darkness of the mind.[6] At the coming of understanding it will vanish as dreams at awakening. But never will it vanish until understanding has come. It goes on, only because we, who are voices, who suggest, who might elucidate and inspire are ourselves such little scattered creatures that though we strain to the breaking point, we still have no strength to turn on the light that would save us. There have been moments in the last three weeks when life has seemed a waking nightmare, one of those frozen nightmares when, with salvation within one's reach, one cannot move and the voice dies in one's throat."[7]

In quoting so much from Mr. Wells concerning the "real task before mankind, beyond the business of the fighting line," it is not suggested that he and those who assisted his propaganda were indifferent to the more superficial aspects of the war, or that their view of the deeper issues was not shared to some extent by the Conservative writers and journalists. The ideal nature of those issues was early declared everywhere, as much in the pages of the *Times, Daily Mail, John Bull,* as in the columns of the Liberal press. Only a very close comparative study of the newspapers, though it often reveals a literary similarity between the idealistic expressions of all (particularly between those of the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily News*), reveals ground for the supposition put

[6] This sentence, whose obscurity might suggest misquotation, is textually correct.

[7] Since the outbreak of war, Mr. Wells's output of articles, had, however, been considerable.

forward at the beginning of this chapter, that in the Liberal mind the generally prevalent idealism, brought on, if one may use so crude an expression, by Germany's behaviour towards Belgium, assumed from the first a singular sublimity due to the conflict the Liberal mind was in. The idealism which the *Times* and its followers promoted was only essential to the conduct of the war in the sense that it was useful for the purpose of rousing enthusiasm for the war *outside* the staff of the *Times*. The *Times* itself could have done quite well without it; its pre-war utterances showed that it was prepared at all costs "to stand by its friends" and needed no stimulus to intervention beyond its allegiance to the theory of the Balance of Power. But the idealism which the *Daily News* and *Nation* set in motion was of a more organically indispensable kind; it was essential in the sense that without it the *Daily News* and *Nation* themselves could not have borne the shock of war. The choice between Utopia and Hell, upon which an article in the *Nation* of August 15 declared that the future of European civilisation depended, was the choice with which the distraught Liberal mind was faced at the outbreak of war. "We must cast from us once and for all the fear of being Utopian," said the article, "we have to choose between Utopia and Hell." "It must never happen again!" . . . "The task of our generation is to bring something better out of our universal war. We cannot afford to let history run in stoic cycles, in which each century repeats the failure of the last and worlds are burned and created by a fated alternation. This war began because Austria claimed her right as a sovereign State to do as she pleased with Servia. It became inevitable because Germany blindly backed her in that claim. It must end . . . in the recognition that there are rights and duties which belong to the whole system of States, that no power may safely defy the general will, that Powers cannot, without the risk of a general ruin, combine in partial groups, that the only tolerable Alliance must be as wide as Europe itself. It must end, in a word, with the creation of a concert."

The choice between two mental conditions corresponding

to Utopia and Hell had already been taken by Liberal minds. The war, despite their protests and intentions, had fallen upon Liberals; being "in" it, they could not bring themselves to oppose it; they chose to go forward and "win." They could not look so equably as their Conservative comrades at the immediate origins of the war; towards the question of ultimate origins, their reserves as to the policy which had led to the war remained, though in a state of suspended animation owing to the fact that they were "in." Satisfied as they were, after the publication of the White Paper (August 6), and Mr. Asquith's speech upon the "infamous proposal" (August 7) that, under the circumstances, Sir Edward Grey *could* not have acted differently, they still retained from those sleeping reserves enough sense of the difference between "could" and "should" to make them uneasy in deciding whether they *should* have gone in. This uneasiness is very noticeable in the pages of the *Nation,* which, being a weekly paper, had more time than a daily one, such as the *Daily News,* to consider what factor in the final situation had produced, to use Mr. Massingham's own words in his explanatory letter (*Daily News,* August 15), "the tremendous revulsion" of thinking and feeling. If the *Daily News* had had the advantage which the *Nation* had of perusing the White Paper before announcing its change of opinion, it would, doubtless, have found something to say more congenial to Liberal consciences than "Being in, we must win." The Government, of course, needed nothing to increase public confidence in the rightness of its action—"there was such confidence everywhere," as A.G.G. remarked,—but it would probably have relieved the Liberal papers from some mental anxiety if the White Paper could have been published before, instead of after, the outbreak of war.

The *Nation* of August 8, which, of course, went to press before the White Paper (published on the 7th) could be thoroughly examined, was very guarded in its judgment upon the final situation. Its leading articles, "The War of Fear" and "The End of the Balance of Power," addressed themselves to expounding that what had happened was "the fatal

consequence of the pursuit of the Balance of Power." "The war, inspired by a state of universal and accumulated fear, is by groups rather than by nations, and is governed by an intricate system of alliances, in which we have just discovered, to the general astonishment, that we were in honour partners." In the sentence immediately following this it acknowledged the confusion, almost the contradiction, of the issues involved. "Its one salient good will be the early and complete destruction of German militarism, for which we all pray; . . . its grand parallel evil may be the aggrandisement of Russia. We, in particular, are at war on behalf of France, the noblest member of the European family, and for Servia, the basest." Both articles laid stress upon the inevitability of war in a Europe governed by the theory of the Balance and acknowledged that Sir Edward Grey's efforts for peace during the crisis were too late to avert the "natural consequence" in which "the system of two armed camps" had resulted.

"1. Sir Edward Grey spoke truly of his strenuous labours in the cause of peace. For twelve days at least the British Government in common with other Governments trod that heavily encumbered road. But the world is not in the hands of blind inconsequence and the event of Wednesday morning hung, not on that fevered quest, but on the eight years' journeyings of Europe towards the goal which we, and others, have reached."

"2. It is clear that Sir E. Grey, for all his untiring efforts to mediate, regarded himself throughout as a member of the Triple Entente and intended to stand by his friends if the issue became European. He strove, indeed, to form a Concert. But between the theory of the Balance and the theory of the Concert there is an absolute contradiction. Respected by the Germans, transparently sincere, manifestly friendly, his voice when it spoke was still a voice that came from one of the armed camps. In the last fatal hours of the crisis he seems to have perceived that at the root of all the difficulty there lay neither the Servian nor the Belgian issue. We find him on July 30 making to Germany a remarkable offer. He

had hesitated to make it before and felt that it might be regarded as 'Utopian.' It was the promotion of 'some arrangement' to which Germany should be a party 'by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia and ourselves, jointly or separately.' We are not quite sure what this means in detail, but its spirit is clear. It is an offer of permanent peace between the two groups. It meant, in a word, the Constitution of a Concert, and the fusing in it of the group system. The proposal came too late. One cannot transform the European system while every Power is watching in alarm the mobilisation of its neighbour.'' The moral of the catastrophe, continued the article, was ''as clear as daylight.'' The war, which ''began with a failure to improvise a Concert'' must end with ''realisation of Sir Edward Grey's nascent idea of a European system freed from the menace of group rivalries and solid only to repress the egoisms and compose the feuds of its equal members.'' The daylight clarity of that conclusion was, however, complicated by another judgment which, upon analysis, is seen to contain the reasoned grounds of the sentence *''Being in, we must win.''* ''Victory, complete and unquestioned, there must be for our arms,'' declared the article, because, though for the system which produced the war every Power was responsible, the ''heavy balance of criminality'' in the last crisis only too clearly lay with Germany. She had, indeed ''gone through the sensation of being penned in,'' a normal sensation in the state of affairs produced by the Balance; also, ''her fears of Russian mobilisation may possibly have been a reflection of the complacency with which French and Russian experts [8] had discussed the recent Russian military reform''—(''the whole world had been told that Russia was in a position to take the offensive'')—but it was she who ''had brought down upon Europe all the latent terrors of the system of the armed peace and the balance of power.'' It was clear that she had regarded herself throughout as an ally of Austria and intended to stand by her friend if the

[8] Also British, see the *Times*, Spring of 1914.

issue became European; "she held the principle of isolated and self-determined action by her ally so dear that to vindicate it she was prepared to risk a general war." She had resisted Sir Edward Grey's "proposal of a joint mediation by the four relatively disinterested Powers," being doubtless under the illusion that his voice when it spoke for peace came from one of the armed camps. "Her positive contribution to the whole discussion was the fatal suggestion that Austria and Russia had better discuss their differences between themselves." She had been insensitive to Sir Edward Grey's sudden perception during the last fatal hours of the crisis that the issue was not a Servian or a Belgian question, but "broadly, whether in time of danger there shall be a European Concert and whether neutrals may intervene to prevent a conflagration." In short, she had been so completely a victim of the state of "universal and accumulated fear" belonging to that European system, which "one cannot transform while every Power is watching in alarm the mobilisation of its neighbour," that she had been less sanguine than the *Nation* that the "mediation of the four relatively disinterested Powers" would constitute, "broadly," "neutral" intervention. Tested by the principles of that as yet unpromoted "arrangement," whose meaning was a little doubtful to the *Nation,* though its spirit was clear, and which Sir E. Grey had hesitated to propose until the last moment, feeling that it might be regarded as "Utopian," her conduct was criminal. Small wonder that the *Nation* in condemning her, and the politics of that Balance whose latent terrors she had so realised, declared that "victory, complete and unquestioned," there must be for the arms of those whose spokesman had at the last moment perceived the root of the difficulty and had made the remarkable offer which revealed the issue at stake so clearly and enabled the *Nation* to support the war. Germany had "made this conflict in sum and substance to resist the principle of a European Concert," which Sir Edward Grey had hesitatingly mentioned when it was too late. The proposal had come too late to avert war, which was the "natural consequence" of the system of two armed

camps, but not too late to transform the "absolute contradiction" between the *Nation's* previous attitude and its present one into one single "Utopian" aim.

In the following week's *Nation* the presentation of the conflict as one between the ideal of a Concert and resistance to it was continued with the detail which further study of the White Paper revealed. From that study Sir Edward Grey emerged as one whose efforts for peace had been underrated in the previous number's impression that "it was clear that he regarded himself throughout as a member of the Triple Entente." It was now clear that his language had been "that of a mediator, not of an ally of France, still less of an associate of Russia." The *Nation* found "small reason to suppose that our effort to secure peace failed of its effects with Germany because of our undefined or partially defined relationship to the Entente," though apparently it was still clear that the war was the fatal consequence of the division of Europe into two armed camps—"We can and we will have no such diplomatic system as that which pitifully slipped into this war of nations." Its previous conception of Britain as a member of one of the camps faded before the picture of Sir Edward Grey, the mediator, "that usually reserved and somewhat unimaginative man, impulsive, resourceful, indefatigable in the cause of peace." The impression gathered from the "tragic pages" of the White Paper was no longer that of a man whose voice when it spoke for peace was a voice from one of the armed camps, but of "a heart and mind responsive to human feeling rather than to conventional codes of honour." The impression of Germany had also altered; the sensation of being "penned in" and her fear of Russian mobilisation were no longer noticeable; instead there rose "a force so unintelligent and so confident in its own strength as to resist with proud self-sufficiency all attempts to convert it into an instrument of human policy for Europe."

The German case, as presented by the official "Denkschrift," which the *Nation* had had the opportunity of studying, fastened the responsibility for the outbreak of war upon

Russia. The Russian general mobilisation, it declared, made war inevitable. "We need not recite the facts in full as this document (the 'Denkschrift') gives them" was the editorial comment. "The German case is, in a word, that Russia lied.[9] General Sukhomlinoff had given his word of honour on Monday, the 27th, that no reservists had yet been called out, and no horse commandeered. But none the less the German Military Attaché reported, rightly or wrongly, that 'news of Russian mobilisation came thick and fast.'" The *Nation* evaded judging between these two statements, merely remarking: "The fact is that every Power was preparing for war." It proceeded, however, to indict Germany upon a charge which, in face of the existing evidence, might also have been brought against Russia.[10] "In plain words, she would have made no effort to avert a Russo-German war, if only we would have consented to stand aside on terms. That is, to us, the damning fact against Germany."[11]

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[9] Since admitted in General Sukhomlinoff's statement: "I lied to the Tsar."

[10] That Russia and France were determined for war, whether England came in or not, was admitted by Sazonov, the Russian Foreign Minister, in 1916. See Baron M. F. Schilling's "How the War Began," pp. 47-51.

[11] In its issue of August 1, the "Nation" had viewed the prospect of a Russo-German war with more indifference, and the question of our being in any way involved, as too absurd for discussion. It then wrote: "The knowledge that we were prepared to back her (Russia) is the one thing which might induce Russia to make war, and there the whole danger lies. We have no British interests in the Balkans—none. We should prefer that no Power exercised hegemony there. But if hegemony there is, it is nothing to us whether it be wielded by Austrians or Russians. Indeed, of the two Powers we think Austria, on the whole, the better and more civilising influence. We are neither Germans nor Slavs. If the crime of a racial war is bound to come, there is no call of the blood which can involve us. The more we deplore the tragedy, the more clear is our duty to keep aloof from it. . . . Every article, every word which suggests that we are a military factor in the Triple Entente weakens the only gift which we have to bring to Europe. . . . Our influence is gone, our impartiality compromised, from the moment when it is even hinted that our sword may be thrown into the Russian scale. That our statesmen should dream of sharing with one ship or one battalion in the immense and irrational crime of a general war for a local end that touches no real interest of Western Europe is an absurdity which we need not discuss."

The reference quoted above to the question of Russian responsibility for the outbreak of war is particularly characteristic of the Liberal state of mind at this time. The notion that Russia presented any sort of danger to Germany or to Europe was not entirely suppressed but it was glided over with remarkable agility, regarded, as it were, with a "wall eye." No inferences which could affect the *Daily News* formula: *"Being in, we must win"* were drawn from it. It was left, whenever it was mentioned, as a disconnected fact,[12] its bearing upon the present situation was set aside and it was allowed only to exercise itself in the region of the future, whither Liberal aims, accompanied by the strongest optimism as regards its behaviour, frequently wended. "Its grand parallel evil," said the *Nation*, speaking of the war, whose one salient good was to be the destruction of German militarism, "may be the aggrandisement of Russia," and, in the same number, it said again: "We may have to realize that there is more than one great military Empire in Europe. A Russian hegemony would be an even graver menace to European liberties than the German supremacy, which is almost certainly ended for ever." With almost cynical detachment, it admitted into its columns an article, "The Nation's State of Mind," which acknowledged that the English mind was keeping Russia "out of the picture" altogether, so as not to be dismayed by the potential dangers lurking there. "The collective, self-protective instinct compels us to envisage

[12] That the "Nation" was incapable of appreciating the significance to Germany of the Russian mobilisation is further shown by the following Note (September 19) on Sir M. de Bunsen's despatch: "The despatch goes on rather more fully than the White Paper to enlarge on the moderation shown by Austria at the last moment, the favourable posture of the negotiations with Russia, and on the fact that she had really conceded the main point—mediation on the points of the ultimatum which Servia had accepted. This promising exchange of views was suddenly cut short by the Russo-German quarrel over the Russian mobilisation. Had Germany refrained from launching her ultimatum just then, a few days' delay might in all probability have saved Europe from one of the greatest calamities in history." The use of the word "quarrel" in this connection shows how little importance was attached by the "Nation" to this factor in the course of events.

the conflict in forms and colours which will best invigorate and sustain our fighting energies. Take one example. No intelligent man who has followed the current of politics during the last eight years and carefully studied in last week's White Paper its debouch into the sea of conflict can doubt that the efficient cause of this war, as it affects our nation, is the European acceptance of belief in the Balance of Power. Another part of the same self-protective economy is that Russia figures virtually nowhere in our minds. When the story of these events comes to be recorded in the perspective of world-history, it is at least likely that the whole episode may rank as the first westward and southward break of the great Slav Power. But as we see it now, Russia is simply not in the picture. Why not? First because the menace of German militarism, in all its stupendous complacency and cold cruelty, has forced itself into the front of our imagination and because, secondly, as history may see it, the sight we have conjured up might paralyse our hearts and for our fighting we need the stoutest hearts that we can muster."

The sight of the "great Slav Power's breaking out eastward and southward" and what that might eventually lead to was enough to paralyse the Liberal heart, but it gave no thought to what paralysing fear may have come to those who had actually to stem that breaking out. No; Liberals were helping the "great Slav Power" and needed for their fighting the stoutest hearts that they could muster, even if the hearts could only be kept stout by an observation of facts which was at least, narrow. Russia, of course, did present difficulties, but nothing apparently was to be gained by envisaging those difficulties too gloomily. As A.G.G. had said in the *Daily News,* "we must hope for the best as regards Russia, perhaps the influence of the Allies would count for something" and make for her moral regeneration. The *Nation* was less optimistic; it could not conceal its recognition that our alliance with Czarist Russia was a flaw in the war. In an article, "The Future of the Poles" (August 22), it sounded a querulous note. It welcomed the Tsar's proclamation to the Poles, but wondered what that could possibly offer

to the Austrian Poles, who were very well off under Austrian rule, having no grievance of language, religion and self-government. They had their own Provincial Diet with full Home Rule. "In the Austrian Reichsrath, they have a powerful national party, which is almost invariably found in the Ministerial Coalition . . . Their proletariat would exchange manhood suffrage for a jerrymandered franchise and would have to learn that its powerful and enlightened Socialist party had become by the transference (to Russia) 'illegal' and 'powerless.'" This worried the *Nation;* likewise it was uneasy "when we are told that Russia means the annexation of Danzig and Königsberg. The old Hansa town and the University which gave Kant to the world are among the most venerable seats of German culture. If such a line were to be drawn by Russia, it would make in the East a problem which would repeat all the consequences of France's lost provinces in the West." "The programme of this war," it said anxiously, "has already broadened into cataclysmic change." "We went into war in step with the French and they want nothing more than Alsace-Lorraine. But the Russians," it pursued aghast, "have already sketched a great Poland and a great Servia. If the Italians and the Rumanians must also be paid for their neutrality [13] with the Trentino and Transylvania, then it is obvious that Austria will have sunk from the rank of a great power to the magnitude of one of the larger Balkan States." This did not bode well to the *Nation.* "The Balance of Europe would in that case be gone and a lower civilisation threatens in some regions of the East to replace a more advanced culture; and finally it is hard to see what reality of independence would remain to the Austro-Germans, the Magyars and the Rumanians, hemmed in between an aggrandised Russia and the southern Slavs." It *was* hard to see and could only be seen with the help of the conviction that the war, "which may with good fortune be ended in a few weeks" would end with the estab-

[13] The assistance of Italy and Rumania was, later, engaged at prices, details of which are given in the Secret Treaties concluded with those countries. See "The Secret Treaties" by F. Seymour Cocks.

lishment of a real concert, with the minimum of territorial change, and the German Powers neither isolated nor dismembered. From the beginning of the war the *Nation* had urged the necessity of acting with prudence and firmness in the settlement and of not prolonging the war by one superfluous hour once "victory, complete and unquestioned," had been achieved for our arms. After a short war, which could be secured by resisting the temptation to prolong it at the demands of Russian egoism, "we shall, we *hope,* have only one Power able to obstruct the re-organisation of a truly civilised Europe, and that will be Russia. What she will do is, of course, a question of the greatest importance. *We will hope* that her pledge of autonomy to the Poles means something more than a bid for the disintegration of Prussian and Austrian Poland, and that her Government, not always impervious to ideals, though never long faithful to them, will take account of the fact that if all goes well, *as we dare hope,* she will have to deal with a deeply changed Europe. Her people are extraordinarily sensitive to change, and no literature exists quite so sympathetic, so full of the spirit of intuitive feeling for human suffering and failure. If, therefore, we can get through without sheer anarchy, we may see a tide of true progress, under the forms and sanctity of international unity, powerful enough to carry with it the one great remaining centre of reaction. The victory of the Allies —for victory it will be—will be won essentially by the stand made by little Belgium and the supporting hand of Great Britain. Russia's immense weight will be a powerful factor and the Slav element will be another." So the picture, out of which Russia was kept for such excellent reasons, was sketched, and the mind of the *Nation* was calm. The importance of keeping calm was ever realised by the *Nation;* in the article previously quoted, which discussed the workings of a "self-protective economy," calmness was postulated as more valuable than "representations which will inflame our effective hatred of the enemy" because of the "disastrous reactions of such intense emotionalism upon the judgment and intelligence, and so upon the direction of conduct."

The *Nation* rejoiced that the country on the whole *was* calm; "even when the trouble about Servia boded war between Austria and Russia, our ignorance of the larger implications kept us calm"—and it found much consolation in noting the quiet, serious demeanour of the people everywhere. Though it was a war, it was a "passionless war." "No one hates anybody, not we the Germans, nor the Germans us." That was a great satisfaction to the *Nation*. Another consolation was the wise precautionary measures undertaken by the Government in every direction. "The right note" was being struck, all round. Lord Kitchener's appeal to the Expeditionary Force was "a high and sober ideal of a soldier's conduct." The Government's steps for dealing with unemployment and want, the War Emergency Committee's doings, the Moratorium, all were worthy of the great task ahead. It was, after all, to use an American expression, a "perfectly good" war. Liberals need not be nervous; Utopia could not fail to come in the end. The "stuff" of the nation seemed excellent to Mr. Massingham, as he wrote his letter to the *Daily News* (August 15), explaining what was in his mind. He confessed that he had been one of those to whom "the idea of a European war and of our country taking part in it" had brought "a measure of personal distress which exceeds even our private griefs." Less far-sighted than Mr. Wells, he had signed and assisted in advertising Stop the War appeals and declarations. But though Sir Edward Grey's speech had left him "unconvinced and hostile" on the question of intervention, the reading of the White Paper had produced a "tremendous revulsion" and he had been unable to resist the evidence that we were forced into war. The situation, too, had its hopeful sides. It was "all but clear" that Germany would be beaten, and for that, Mr. Massingham thought we ought to say *Deo Gratias!* "We should win, probably without great losses." Best of all was the circumstance that "the real defeat of Goliath would come from the hands of a David," and that thereby the world would learn that spiritual force did count. It would be a lesson, he admitted, that might be forgotten, especially by Russia,

when it came to settlement, but, on the other hand, if we acted with the utmost prudence and firmness, a new Europe, possibly even a disarmed or a lightly armed Europe, might be the result. Altogether the prospect was very cheering.

Meanwhile, Mr. Wells, possibly by way of celebrating the truce, he had made of his finer feelings, was bent on destroying the fear of Russia, which so troubled the Liberal mind. His self-protective economy was based on rasher but more vigorous principles than those which banished Russia to the background of Liberal minds.[14]

He brought Russia into the picture by the simple process of removing those ideas about her which had hitherto kept her out. "It is evident," he wrote in an article, "The Liberal Fear of Russia" (*Nation,* August 22), "that there is very considerable dread of the power and intentions of Russia in this country. It is well that the justification of this dread should be discussed for it is likely to affect the attitude of British and American Liberalism very profoundly, both towards the continuation of the war and towards the ultimate settlement. It is, I believe, an exaggerated dread, arising out of our extreme ignorance of Russian realities. English people imagine Russia to be more purposeful than she is, more concentrated, more inimical to Western civilisation. . . . They imagine that the tremendous unification of State and the national pride and ambition which has made the German Empire at last insupportable, may presently be repeated upon an altogether more gigantic scale, that Pan-Slavism will take the place of Pan-Germanism as the ruling aggression of the world. This is a dread due, I am convinced, to fundamental misconceptions and hasty parallelisms. Russia is . . . incapable of that tremendous unification. Not for two centuries yet, if ever, will it be necessary for a reasonably united Western Europe to trouble itself, once Prussianism has been disposed of, about the risk of definite aggression from the East. I do not think it will ever have to trouble itself. Socially

[14] There is, of course, no reason to suppose that these principles were borrowed from abroad. Those who have studied Mr. Wells are fully aware of his British originality.

and politically, Russia is an entirely unique structure. . . . In bulk she is barbaric. Between 80 and 90 per cent. of her population is living at a level very little above the level of those agricultural Aryan races who were scattered over Europe before the beginning of written history. It is an illiterate population . . . indeed, a helpless, unawakened mass. Above these peasants come a few millions of fairly well educated and actively intelligent people. Either they are officials, clerical or lay, in the great Government machine that was consolidated chiefly by Peter the Great to control the souls and bodies of the peasant mass, or they are private persons more or less resentfully entangled in that machine. At the head of this structure, with powers of interference strictly determined by his individual capacity,[15] is that tragic figure, the Tsar. That briefly is the composition of Russia, and it is unlike any other State on earth. It will follow laws of its own and have a destiny of its own.

"Involved with the affairs of Russia are certain less barbaric states. There is Finland, which is by comparison highly civilised, and Poland, which is not nearly so far in advance of Russia. Both these countries are perpetually uneasy under the blundering pressure of foolish attempts to 'Russianise' them. In addition, in the South and East are certain provinces thick with Jews, whom Russia can neither contrive to tolerate nor assimilate, who have no comprehensible projects for the help or reorganisation of the country, and who deafen all the rest of Europe with their bitter, unhelpful tale of grievances, so that it is difficult to realise how local and partial are their wrongs. There is a certain 'Russian idea,' containing within itself all the factors of failure, inspiring the general policy of this vast amorphous State. It found its completest expression in the now defunct Pobedonotsev[16] and it pervades the bureaucracy. It is obscurantist, denying the common people education; it is orthodox, forbidding free thought and preferring conformity to ability; it is bureaucratic and autocratic, it is Pan-Slavic, Russianising, and ag-

[15] Certainly determined by nothing else.

[16] Who all but annihilated Finland, among other trifles.

gressive. It is this 'Russian' idea that Western Liberalism dreads, and, as I want to point out, dreads unreasonably. I do not want to plead that it is not a bad thing; it is a bad thing. I want to point out that, unlike Prussianism, it is not a great danger to the world at large. So long as this Russian idea, this Russian Toryism, dominates Russian affairs Russia can never be really formidable, either to India, China, or to the Liberal nations of Western Europe. And whenever she abandons this Toryism and becomes modern and formidable, she will cease to be aggressive. That is my case. While Russia has the will to oppress the world she will never have the power; when she has the power she will cease to have the will. Let me state my reasons for this belief as compactly as possible, because if I am right a number of Liberal-minded people in Great Britain and America and Scandinavia . . . are wrong. They may want to bolster up a really dangerous and evil Austria-cum-Germany at the expense of France, Belgium and subject Slav populations because of their dread of this Russia, which can never be at the same time evil and dangerous. Now first let me point out what the Boer war showed and what this tremendous conflict in Belgium is already enforcing, that the day of the unintelligent common soldier is past; that men who are animated and individualised can, under modern conditions, fight better than the men who are unintelligent and obedient. Soldiering is becoming more specialised. It is calling for the intelligent handling of weapons so elaborate and destructive that great masses of men in the field are an encumbrance rather than a power. . . . Consequently Russia can only become powerful enough to overcome any highly civilised European country by raising its own average education and initiative, and this it can only do by abandoning its obscurantist methods, by 'liberalising' upon the Western European model. That is to say it will have to teach its population to read, to multiply its schools and increase its universities: and that will make an entirely different Russia from this one we fear. It involves a relaxation of the grip of orthodoxy, an alteration of the intellectual outlook of officialdom, an abandonment of

quasi-religious autocracy,—in short, the complete abandonment of the 'Russian idea' as we know it. And it means also a great development of local self-consciousness. Russia seems homogeneous now, because in the mass it is so ignorant as to be unaware of its differences; but an educated Russia means a Russia in which Ruthenian and Great Russian, Lett and Tartar will be mutually critical and aware of one another. The existing Russian idea will need to give place to an entirely more democratic, tolerant and cosmopolitan idea of Russia as a whole, if Russia is to emerge from its barbarism and remain united. There is no cheap 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles' sentiment ready to hand. National quality is against it. Patience under patriotism is a German weakness. Russians could no more go on singing 'Russia, Russia over all' than Englishmen could go on singing 'Rule Britannia.' It would bore them. The temperament of none of the Russian people justifies the belief that they will repeat on a larger scale even as much docility as the Germans have shown under the Prussians." Mr. Wells drew further brilliant sketches of the "naturally wise, humorous and impatient Russian people" as compared to the "self-conscious, drill-dulled, soulless culture of Germany," and continued: "This is a terrible world, I admit, but Prussianism is the sort of thing that does not happen twice. Russia is substantially barbaric. Who can deny it? State-stuff rather than a State. But people in Western Europe are constantly writing of Russia and the Russians as though the qualities natural to barbarism were qualities inherent in the Russian blood. Russia massacres, sometimes even with official connivance. But Russia in all its history has no massacres so abominable as we gentle English were guilty of in Ireland in the 16th and 17th centuries. Russia, too, Russianises sometimes clumsily, sometimes rather successfully. But Germany has sought to Germanise—in Bohemia and Poland, for instance, with conspicuous violence and failure. We 'Anglicised' Ireland. These forcible efforts to create uniformity are natural to a phase of social and political development from which no people on earth have yet fully emerged. And if we set ourselves now

to create a reunited Poland under the Russian Crown, if we bring all the great influence of the Western Powers to bear upon the side of the liberalising forces in Finland, if we do not try to thwart and stifle Russia by closing her legitimate outlet into the Mediterranean we shall do infinitely more for human happiness than if we distrust her, check her, and force her back upon the barbarism from which, with a sort of blind, pathetic wisdom, she seeks to emerge. It is unfortunate for Russia that she has come into conspicuous conflict with the Jews.[17] She has certainly treated them no worse than she has treated her own people. . . . And while Russian reverses will throw back her civilisation and intensify the sufferings of all her subject Jews, Russian success in this alliance will inevitably spell Westernisation, progress, and amelioration for them. But unhappily this does not seem to be patent to many Jewish minds.[18] While we are still in the opening phase of this struggle for life against the Prussianised German Empire, this struggle to escape from the militarism which has been slowly strangling civilisation, it is a huge misfortune that this racial resentment which, great as it is, is still a little thing beside the world issues involved, should break the united front of Western civilisation, and that the confidence of Russia should be threatened, as it is threatened now by doubt and disparagement in the press. *We are not so sure of victory that we can estrange an ally.* We have to make up our minds to see all Poland reunited under the Russian Crown, and if the Turks choose to play a foolish part it is not for us to quarrel about the fate of Constantinople. The

[17] It has also been exceedingly unfortunate for the Jews.

[18] It was not patent to Mr. Zangwill who replied to Mr. Wells in the "Nation" of August 29: "My friend, Mr. Wells, does not seem to understand that the Liberal fear of Russia is not so much a fear of Russia's hostility as of Russia's friendship. We cannot, of course, change Allies in mid-fight, and the Russian alliance is a melancholy necessity against the German disturber of civilisation. But evil communications corrupt good manners, and Mr. Wells's easy-going tolerance for massacre and oppression is not auspicious for the righteous readjustment of things when Britain has conquered. If this is the effect of the Entente even on a professed world-teacher and Utopia builder, what can we expect from the man in the music-hall?"

Allies are not to be tempted into a quarrel about Constantinople. The balance of power in the Balkans, that is to say, incessant intrigue between Austria and Russia, has arrested the civilisation of South-Eastern Europe for a century. Let it topple. An unchallenged Russia will be a wholesome check and no great danger for the new Greater Servia and the new Greater Rumania and the enlarged and restored Bulgaria, this war renders possible." After saying that only Sweden was "really threatened" by Russia, Mr. Wells proceeded: "But if the Scandinavian countries abstain from any participation in this present war, then I do not see what is to prevent us and France and Germany from making the most public, definite and binding declaration of our common interest in Sweden's integrity and our common determination to preserve it. Beyond that I see no danger to civilisation in Russia anywhere—at least no danger so considerable as the Kaiser-Krupp power we fight to finish. This war, even if it brings us the utmost success, will still leave Russia face to face with a united and chastened Germany.[19] For it must be remembered that the downfall of Prussianism and the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire will leave German Germany not smaller but larger than she is now. To India, decently governed and guarded, . . . Russia can only be dangerous through the grossest misgovernment on our part and her powers for intervention in China will be restricted for many years . . . So where in all the world is this danger from Russia? The danger of a Krupp-cum-Kaiser dominance of the whole world, on the other hand, is immediate. Defeat, or even partial victory for the Allies, means nothing less than that." [20]

The pith of Mr. Wells's argument is easy to seize. The

[19] It was always part of Mr. Wells's and the Liberals's argument to maintain that the vistory of the Allies would bring no real harm to Germany, only a little wholesome chastening which would presumably liberate, or "liberalise," her from the fear of Russian aggression.

[20] Despite Mr. Wells's advocacy, Russia's destiny never became popular with the Liberals, so much so that the British acquiescence in the Russian demand for the Straits had to be embodied in the Secret Treaties. See F. Seymour Cock's "The Secret Treaties."

danger of defeat from Germany was immediate: the danger from Russia, who was an ally, was not present but remote. Of two dangers, that which is nearest is greater than that which is far off, and, moreover, as Mr. Wells pointed out, *victory was not so certain that we could afford to estrange an ally.* Such extravagance was no part of the self-protective economy of war. The moral could have been put in fewer words. As Wordsworth wrote in 1803, rebuking his country for her trespasses:

> "England! All nations in this charge agree;
> But worse, more ignorant in love and hate,
> Far—far more abject, is thine Enemy."

Mr. Wells's acceptance of the principle outlined above, the principle, perhaps, of the truce of finer feelings which he had previously urged upon his countrymen, found him later on in the company of Mr. Chesterton. In October and November 1914, Mr. Chesterton was contributing a series of articles upon "The Barbarities of Berlin" to the pages of the *Daily Mail.* Not only in their fondness for alliterative sentences are these two writers congenial. "Let no one worry," wrote Mr. Chesterton (November 2), "whether it was really right to fight with the 'Russ' against the 'Pruss.'" It *was* right. The Russ was only a barbarian by accident, but the Pruss was a barbarian by design, he was a "veneered vandal," "wilfully at war with the principle by which human society has been made possible hitherto." "These veneered vandals have the perfectly serious aim of destroying certain ideas which, as they think, the world has outgrown; without which, as we think, the world will die." It was essential that this perilous peculiarity in the Pruss, or Positive Barbarian should be seized. (The Russ was a Negative Barbarian.) "The danger of the Pruss is," said Mr. Chesterton, "that he is prepared to fight for old errors as if they were new truths. . . . his limited but very sincere lunacy concentrates chiefly in a desire to destroy two ideas, the twin root ideas of national society; the first is the idea of record and promise, the second

is the idea of reciprocity.'' The ''promise,'' according to Mr. Chesterton, was what chiefly distinguished man from the animals. There were no promises in the world of brutes, but man's whole existence was based on ''the vow''—''this frail cord flung from the forgotten hills of yesterday to the invisible mountains of to-morrow.'' Only one Power ever broke ''vows'' and treated treaties as ''scraps of paper.'' For that reason it was justifiable to employ ''Asiatics and Africans upon the verge of savagery against him.'' He complained of that. ''In ordinary circumstances,'' said G.K.C., ''I should sympathise with such a complaint made by a European people. But the circumstances are not ordinary. Here again the quite unique barbarism of Prussia goes deeper than what we call barbarities.'' The Prussian's treatment of Belgium showed that he was a worse savage than the Turk and Sikh. But ''the justification of any extra-European aid goes deeper . . . It rests upon the fact that even other civilisations, even much lower civilisations, even remote and repulsive civilisations, depend much as our own upon this primary principle on which the super-morality of Potsdam declares open war. Even savages promise things and respect those who keep their promises . . . The Prussians have been told by their literary men that everything depends upon mood and by their politicians that all arrangements dissolve before 'necessity.' Therefore it is a fight for Trust and Tryst. . . . And in this quarrel we have a right to come with scimitars as well as sabres, with bows as well as rifles, with assegai and tomahawk and boomerang, because there is in all these at least a seed of civilisation that these intellectual Anarchists would kill.'' Mr. Wells must have been grateful to his companion, whose blessing upon assegai and tomahawk and boomerang so well declared his understanding of the truce.

''Russia was *much* better than Prussia,'' continued Mr. Chesterton on December 1st. The essential difference between Russia and Prussia was that Russia had a policy which she pursued through good and, let it be admitted, evil, but at least so as to produce good as well as evil. Russia was pur-

suing certain intelligible and sincere ends which to her at least were ideals. But the North German soldier was a sort of abstract tyrant, everywhere and always on the side of materialistic tyranny. "Wherever scorn and prosperous aggression are, there is the Prussian; unconsciously consistent, instinctively restrictive, innocently evil"; "following darkness like a dream."

Prussia had a whole thriving factory of thumbscrews, a whole humming workshop of wheels and racks of the newest and neatest patterns with which to win back Europe to reaction. "If the Russian institutions are old-fashioned, they honestly exhibit the good as well as the bad that can be found in old-fashioned things. But the Prussian has no accidental merits; none of those lucky survivals, none of those late repentances which make the patchwork glory of Russia. Here all is sharpened to a point and pointed to a purpose; and that purpose, if words and acts have any meaning at all, is the destruction of liberty throughout the world." [22]

The similarity between Mr. Wells's and Mr. Chesterton's articles rather obscures the profound psychological difference between the attitude of the two papers in which these articles happened to appear. That difference is undeniable; it is a difference which no truce has destroyed, though it is true that the advent into political journalism of the literary writer whose literary gifts and reputation are not always matched by his political knowledge has made for a superficial likeness between all papers. It is also true that the idealism which was first voiced by Mr. Wells soon became all-pervading and that its leading images and conceptions were speedily as much at home in the Conservative as they were in the Liberal press. A careful student might remark a more exuberant imagery in the *Daily Mail*, but, on the other hand, for variety, rarity and

[22] cf. Wordsworth, October, 1803:

"How piteous . . .
that whole myriads should unite
To work against themselves such fell despite:
Should come in phrensy and in drunken mirth,
Impatient to put out the only light
Of Liberty that yet remains on earth."

cultured simile in depicting the conflict he might incline to the *Daily News*.[23] For a subtler, and, if Mr. Wells's articles be left out, more soberly worded exposition of "The German Gospel," he would assuredly lay his hand upon the *Nation* and have its numbers bound as a monument of the enlightened mind's swift, though sorrowful, apprehension of the profound issues involved. There is no sorrow in the *Daily Mail's* contemplation of the catastrophe, except perhaps for those who had not seen it coming; there is joy, amounting often to exultation, that the war, so long expected, had at last arrived. The joy of fulfilled expectations was added to by the consideration that, on our part, the war had not been sought; it was Germany who had chosen the occasion to provoke it. Consequently, Conservatives and Imperialists went into the war with that clear conscience which is possessed by those who, never having questioned their own actions, do not reproach themselves. But the conscience of the Liberals was a troubled one; there was, to quote their own words, "a foreground of fact and a background that is vaguely compounded of hopes and fears, previsions and resolves." ("Utopia or Hell," *Nation*, August 15, 1914.) Large among the fears in that background were the misgivings about Russia, whose hegemony "would be an even graver menace to European liberties than the German supremacy" and the recognition that the failure of the last cycle of European politics was due to every Power's responsibility for the system of the Balance of Power, between maintenance of which and hopes for the establishment of a concert there was "an absolute contradiction." Not all the White, Yellow and Orange Papers in Europe, with their testimony to Germany's "balance of criminality" could remove from the Liberal mind the sense of its own Government's participation in that intricate system of alliances, in which Liberals only discovered themselves at the last moment to be "bound in honour" partners. The

[23] It should, however, be noted that the description of Prussia as the "road-hog of Europe" came from a Liberal Statesman, and that this "brilliant sketch" so impressed the "Nation" that it reprinted it in full.

fact of war silenced their questions of the present; with one prayer and one resolve they turned to the future. "It must never happen again," they said passionately. "We have to choose between Utopia and Hell." "Henceforward there must be an end of wars for the Balance of Power." "The only road out of this Inferno is the road which leads to a permanent and formal Concert, organised to settle the common affairs of Europe by a standing Federal Council."

"It must never happen again" was heartily echoed from Conservative quarters, but with no Utopian notions concerning ways and means. The resolve had a simpler meaning for the *Times* and *Daily Mail* than it had for the *Nation* and *Daily News*. To the former it meant that Germany, being the sole author of most past, all present, wars and the designer of future ones, should "quite simply" be wiped out—"her fortresses razed, her navy sunk and her Kaiser beheaded," so that war should not recur; to the latter "it" stood for a catastrophe for which there was, with reservations concerning the late crisis, a common responsibility to the extent that the politics of all the Powers had been based upon a system which, considered theoretically, was bound to issue in war, (though actually it only did so because of Germany's aggression) and which would have to be abandoned by all if war in future were to be avoided. Allegiance to the ideal of a Concert for the future was the Liberals' tacit acknowledgment of their country's limited delinquency in the past. They could not, with a clear conscience, pursue the defeat of Germany without this ideal, of which the acknowledgment of past delinquency was the inner or subjective aspect. But with this ideal which, of course, repudiated any notion of "crushing" Germany, they could conscientiously pursue victory, complete and unquestioned, for their arms. Victory achieved, there would be no obstacle, except possibly Russia, to the foundation of a League of Nations or Concert of Europe. Germany would be included in the League; the Liberals declared that her inclusion was indispensable to success — but being then morally chastened, she would not disturb the peace again. One great military caste, the Prussian, having been over-

thrown, the Allies would then be able to deal with Russia if it should unfortunately happen that victory should not have quenched her militarism nor subdued her desires for hegemony.

The ideal of a Concert was absent from the minds of the Conservatives. They had nothing to pay for their clear consciences. The background and foreground of their minds were in complete sympathy; there was no confusion or conflict. The present to them was the natural and foreseen outcome of the past, and their view of Germany had only changed in so far as it now amply justified their former predictions. The change in their attitude was one of tense, not of mood; the challenge to British supremacy which Germany's policy had always embodied was now actual, the ever-threatening mailed fist had at last struck. They had no misgivings, such as the Liberals had, concerning their country's past entanglement in the system of the Balance; they regretted only the Liberal influence which had made for procrastination of the struggle and for insufficient measures to confront the challenge with an array of military strength equal to Germany's. They were fully persuaded that the war would never have happened if only Great Britain had armed, if Lord Roberts's reiterated appeal for universal service had been heeded, if the policy of the Entente during recent years had been bolder and less conciliatory. The Balance of Power against Germany, they thought, might have been made so strong that she would not have dared to try its strength; the moral they drew from the whole business was their country's failure, due partly to Liberal influence, partly to the kindly and unsuspicious British character, to realise the dark designs of Germany and the wisdom of the precept "*si vis pacem, para bellum.*" So their propaganda from the outset was concentrated upon bringing home to people, not only the facts concerning Germany's criminality during the period immediately preceding the outbreak of war, but the long story, going far back into the past, of her scheming ambitions and deliberate actions to overthrow the British Empire and to impose her "Kultur" upon all. Their pre-war activities in this direction gave them

an advantage in two respects over the Liberals. The facts they dealt with were not new either to themselves or to a great body of their supporters: the majority of the facts were old soldiers and had already done good service, they needed only to be mustered anew and to be reinforced by fresh ones recruited from the White Paper and other literature which the outbreak of war inspired. Their journey home to people's minds was, therefore, an easy one, for the mass of them were not strangers, and in that familiar company the newcomers were received as friends. So the story of the German plot to dominate the world soon became a household word.

The Liberal version of the war and of the issues at stake was as different from the Conservative story as the Pauline epistles are different from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. In many ways the parallel is an exact one. Paul and the Liberals have much in common. Like Paul, the Liberals were idealists. Like him, they were led by their idealism into interpreting their experience in a large, transcendental way. Like him, their relations with simpler, more literal-minded people were often extremely strained. Paul invested the Gospel story with a transcendentalism and a cosmic importance of which the immediate disciples of Jesus of Nazareth never dreamed. The Liberals' lofty conceptions of the world after the war were as far from Conservative war aims as Paul's teaching was from the traditions of the twelve Apostles. The Liberals, like Paul, avoided certain topics which were awkward to reconcile with their views and, as he did, fixed their eyes upon the future and upon the pattern of Lasting Peace outlined there. If it had not been for Paul, Christianity might never have spread beyond the hills of its birth; if it had not been for Liberalism the War to end War might never have been declared.

It is, of course, impossible to draw hard and fast lines of distinction between the Conservative and Liberal Press, but, on the whole, it may be said that there was a much greater freedom in drawing the picture, a bolder gesture, a less conscious regard for the principles of the self-protective economy of war in the former than in the latter. The idealistic differ-

ence is less noticeable on the surface owing to the fact that the entire vocabulary of Liberal idealism soon passed into general use. But its spirit remained with the Liberals, and the Conservatives who adopted its language were never hampered by its inspiration.

On the other hand, the Conservative view of Germany and of pre-war Anglo-German relations gradually became adopted in general though not in explicit detail by the Liberal Press. The defence of Belgium and the issue which the *Nation* decided to be the crucial one, *i.e.*, Germany's opposition to the ideal of a Concert foreshadowed by Sir Edward Grey's proposal of "mediation by the four relatively disinterested Powers," did not long remain the sufficient causes of war. Such scanty material was inadequate for the substantiation of the idealistic theories which were essential to the Liberals' support of the war. Bricks cannot be made without straw, nor could the ideal of a war to end war be erected upon so narrow a ground as that afforded by the conviction that the war arose out of a diplomatic "failure to improvise a Concert." (*Nation,* August 8.) Germany's "heavy balance of criminality in the last crisis" did not furnish enough handle for the newly uplifted Sword of Peace. A heavy balance had to be set against her over a longer period than that covered by the White Paper, a period wherein could be discovered the early beginnings of those evil ideas which Mr. Wells and his Liberal followers were out to destroy. Consequently, not only of "The German Gospel" and its various prophets and mouthpieces, Nietzsche, Treitschke, Bernhardi, were the Liberals as industrious commentators as any professors who dealt with the same subject in the pages of the *Times,* but they subscribed, too, in a general way to the case advanced by Conservatives against German governmental policy during the years preceding the outbreak of war. They, too, went far back into history with, however, some conspicuous omissions. They were not interested in the details of Liberal diplomacy during the Entente period though at the time those details had afforded them considerable anxiety. They glided in retrospect over the history of Anglo-German relations from 1906

to 1914 and began their study of Continental history in the year 1870. Then according to the *Nation* (August 22) arose the idea of the Balance of Power when "Germany, assuming the general guidance of Continental policy, became a nation of soldiers, and from her example sprang the general European conception of the people in arms." Among the Great Powers it remained only for Britain to complete the circle, and to this, under French pressure, a Conservative Government, with the assent of a portion of the Liberal Party, must within a brief period of its accession to power, eventually have yielded. It was essential to obtain the military combinations corresponding to and securing this political idea. First came the union of the three Empires, isolating France. It was followed by Bismarck's failure to seal the work of 1870 by the destruction of the French Republic, and his refusal to countersign Russian policy in the Near East. A new combination was inevitable. Italy, pushed forward by Bismarck's astute design of isolating France from all her natural allies, was drawn in and the Triple Alliance was created, only to meet the counterweight of the Franco-Russian bond. That formation again was powerless at sea, a capital defect in the age of world commerce. It only remained to win over Britain from her historic policy of isolation. Morally she, or her most formidable classes, had already been won. The German sea-armaments never approached her own, but they were formidable enough to arouse her jealousy and her fears. The circle of the Armed Peace was complete."

This passage is a very perfect example of the Liberal presentation of the case against Germany. In it the Liberal method of argument is seen at its best. The argument, indeed, is scarcely noticeable at first sight. Facts are woven together with the minimum of direction. The refined warp threads in and out so delicately, interpenetrates the facts so subtly, as to leave the faintest impression of Germany's sinister design. That design is indicated as much by the accidence as by the wording of the passage. The use of active verbs in treating of Germany's policy, the choice of passive ones, or of words whose meaning implies passivity, for other nations, is remark-

able. Germany alone is credited with volition; she "assumed the direction of European politics," the rest followed her example, or "yielded." Britain was "won over" to that system of the Balance of Power which, we are led to suppose, was unknown before 1870.[24] The adoption of the impersonal style in such sentences as "it only remained to win over Britain from her historic policy of isolation" just registers the *Nation's* hesitation to attribute in so many words excessive ringleadership to Germany, it is the vestige of its ancient judgment that for the circle of the Armed Peace all Powers were equally responsible. This hesitation did not, however, long continue; or, at least, there were lapses in it. A month later (September 19), in considering what Germany might have done in the past to secure our goodwill in a possibly impending struggle with Russia, an article in the *Nation*, "The Bitter Necessity," commented: "Instead . . . she persisted in arousing our suspicions by adding to her overbearing army a fleet as powerful as her resources could afford." This direct contradiction of Liberal pre-war contentions with regard to Germany's military and naval programme (contentions which laid persistent stress upon the provocation to Germany constituted by the military activities of France and Russia and the naval programme of Great Britain combined with British retention of the "right of capture") does not stand alone as evidence in support of the statement that the Liberals, with certain reservations, adopted the Conservatives' view of pre-war German policy. Both the *Nation* and the *Daily News* contain ample evidence of this kind.

Certainly there were reservations. The Liberal mind is composed of innumerable reservations and study of it is mainly a study of these. Mr. Wells set his followers a harder task even perhaps than he imagined when he counselled a truce of finer feelings for the duration of the war. The truce was attempted at the cost of much discomfort to the Liberal mind. The natural scrupulosity of Liberals could work only up to a certain point; it was denied admittance to the centre

[24] For a pre-war note on the history of the Balance, see "Manchester Guardian," August 1, 1914.

of operations. It was reduced to exercising itself outside matters vital to the conduct of the war and within the opening sentences of paragraphs or articles whose conclusions it was forbidden to touch. Its impotence is best studied in the pages of the *Nation* which undeniably represents the aristocracy of Liberal thought. Typical illustration is afforded by the *Nation's* comments upon "German Atrocities." At first, when atrocities were mooted, good Liberals shrugged their shoulders and said to themselves that here was the familiar old thing again. They knew from experience of the Boer War and themselves admitted that war is "regularly accompanied by a secondary campaign of vilification in each country," and that "a normal part of this vilification consists in the hasty acceptance, repetition and exaggeration of every possible rumour to the discredit of an enemy." They knew, too, that atrocities occurred in all wars. "Fear, excitement and the battle-passion account for them in various proportions, and there will not be a million men gathered together without a certain number of individuals among them capable, under these influences, of acting like fiends." "A very few real acts of horror perpetrated by a handful of men are quite adequate backing for the stories of outrage and massacre, and to such stories little credence should be attached unless they can be thoroughly sifted by impartial authority, a condition scarcely to be realised in war-time." (Article, "The Method of Terror," the *Nation,* September 12.) Knowing all this they were consequently in a position to take up a critical attitude towards the reports of German atrocities which all the newspapers were busy circulating. They had no doubt that "a good percentage of the worst charges against the Germans" were no better authenticated than the average atrocity story. But unfortunately it seemed to them only too true that others were better authenticated. "One hesitates to deal in atrocities," wrote Wayfarer in the *Nation* of September 12, "so obviously is it in the interests of us all to keep the war-feeling down to the minimum of resentful passion. But I am afraid the impeachment of the German conduct of the Belgian invasion no longer rests on native testimony alone.

I hear horrifying reports brought home and related first-hand by British officers and soldiers; nay, the worst and least credible of them, the placing of women in front of the firing line, vouched for by many witnesses and duly reported, for it was held to have produced quite a serious military event. Hardly less astounding are the stories of individual acts of the German soldiery for which, of course, no authority from the officers can have been given. One hopes that most of these tales reflect the haste and impassioned imagination of the battle-fever. But the impression of gross cruelties has gone far and wide among our ranks; and has been conveyed, with precise detail, to friends and authorities at home. This much one is bound to record; beyond it one does not like to go."

It will be noticed that Wayfarer's scruples increase, rather than diminish, the impression of the truth of the general charge. The hesitation to deal in atrocities, which is based upon no other consideration than a desire "to keep the war-feeling down to the minimum of resentful passion," acts as a timid conductor of the reader's imagination through the mazes of rumour up to that mysterious edge beyond which, no doubt for the same prudential reasons as first given, "one does not like to go." Throughout the half-distasteful, half-fascinating adventure, Wayfarer hangs back from too close a scrutiny of the horrible tales, shrinks from directly acknowledging his belief in their truth, *hopes* that "most" of them reflect the "haste and impassioned imagination of the battle-fever" (why that hope should not be extended to all is not explained), but even while he nervously approaches the "worst and least credible of them," he is compelled, by the impression which has gone far and wide, to hint that they may be true. Beyond the hint, for prudential reasons, he does not like to go. But the hint is impregnable. It involves him in no charge of raising the war-feeling above the minimum of resentful passion; he is not suggesting that *much* credence should be attached to stories unless they have been "thoroughly sifted by impartial authority," a "condition scarcely to be realised in wartime"; moreover, the impres-

sion of gross cruelties which he was bound, so reluctantly, to record, was in strict keeping with the *Nation's* previous moderate judgment upon the outbreak of war that the *balance* of criminality lay with Germany. No scruples could overthrow that balance: it rested secure upon the fact that we were "in" the war, and being so incontrovertible, there was no reason why scruples should not be displayed in full; the display merely heightened the contrast between the Allies' innocence and Germany's guilt. The Liberals could afford to be scrupulous up to a point; they knew that their scrupulousness would not seriously affect the balance sheet. They became sometimes quite daring in reporting testimony in favour of the enemy. "It is not easy," wrote the *Nation* on September 26, "to think with charity of the enemy who has devastated Belgium and bombarded Rheims Cathedral. But it may be salutary to place on record the unanimous testimony of some hundreds of English women who arrived this week from Germany that they had been treated with kindness. There is also evidence of humanity to our wounded and of good nature towards our prisoners. The British staff report talks of the bravery of the enemy and warns us that a number of the tales of their misbehaviour are exaggerations, while some of their severities are permissible acts of war. But they 'have committed atrocities on many occasions' and 'are fighting to win, anyhow, regardless of all rules of fairplay.' The truth is, we imagine, that their commanders are brutal when they reckon that brutality will serve a military end; at other times German soldiers show the natural instincts of civilised men. From the field in East Prussia comes the news that the Russian General von Martos was taken before a court-martial, charged with ordering the indiscriminate massacre of all non-combatants, but has been acquitted. The devastation in this province has evidently been wide."

This statement, "the devastation in this province" (*i.e.*, East Prussia) "has evidently been wide," is made so blandly as almost to deprive the reader of suspicion that there may have been atrocities connected with that devastation. The possibility or even the probability of atrocities committed by

the Russians was regarded with that wall eye previously noted as characteristic of the *Nation's* vision. It could see the devastation in East Prussia, but the sight awoke no qualms, or perhaps, knowing that atrocities occurred in all wars, it was not disposed to attach credence to stories of Russian atrocities, especially when the general alleged to have perpetrated them had been brought before a court-martial and acquitted. "The devastation in this province has evidently been wide" was quite sufficient comment. This much the *Nation* was bound to record; beyond it, it was certainly imprudent to go.

A third extract from the *Nation* shows that its original hesitation to deal in atrocities was subsequently lessened. On October 3, 1914, its editorial notes reported:—

"Two shocking records have been added to the story of German barbarities. M. Arthur Terwagne, the brother of the Deputy for Antwerp, has written a letter declaring that during the sack of Dinant, the Germans forced open the doors of houses and murdered everyone they found within, that 40 men hidden in the cellar of a brewery were all shot and that over 200 men and lads were driven on to the Place d'Armes and murdered by a machine gun. The Press Bureau also publishes some letters from German soldiers, compiled from a volume entitled "Kriegs-Chronik." One of these letters tells the story of a little French boy who for the offence of refusing to tell a German column where the French were, was set against a telegraph pole, "and set up against it, with the green vineyard at his back and received the volley of the firing party with a proud smile on his face. Infatuated wretch! It was a pity to see such wasted courage." [25]

[25] This story has been the subject of considerable discussion and correspondence. Mr. J. A. Hobson (*Times*, Oct. 5, 1914) first drew attention to the mis-translation of the word "Französling" as "little French boy," its correct English equivalent being "a German subject with French proclivities," i.e., gravitating culturally or politically towards France.

The diminutive corresponds to the diminutive in "petit Parisien." The preference for the wrong rendering, persisted in after correction, by those who dealt in atrocities, must, therefore, be considered as

"The story reads like truth," remarked the *Nation*, "but even if it were invented it supplies a sad clue to the mentality of some of the invaders. Happily we can set in contrast some fine tributes from our soldiers to the individual charity of German soldiers—especially soldiers—and officers."

"*The Story reads like truth.*" By October then, the *Nation* had apparently departed from the caution of its earlier judgment that little credence should be attached to stories unless they could be "thoroughly sifted by impartial authority, a condition scarcely to be realised in war-time." Truth is now suggested to depend upon credence, upon a story's reading like truth, a test which many quite untrue stories can easily satisfy. The stories of the Russians in London, *via* Archangel to France, read like truth, and when discovered to be untrue were admitted by the *Nation* to supply a clue to the mentality, not, curiously enough, of the Russians, but of those who believed in them. Such clues abound in war-time—"fear, excitement and the battle-passion account for them in various proportions"—and an impartial authority which refused credence to stories unless they could be thoroughly sifted would scarcely refrain from suggesting that the *Nation's* later judgment supplied a sad clue to the mentality of the *Nation*.

The list of scruples owned by the Liberals and allowed, as has been seen, to operate within a prescribed area of the Liberal mind, and at a safe distance from its conclusions, would be incomplete without a reference to the great Scruple concerning the use of Physical Force.

The Liberal Press, unlike the Conservative, deprecated the worship of Force. It saw in it the main cause of war and before the war, as it kept assuring its readers, it always said so. But since Germany was attempting to conquer and subjugate the world by Force there was, alas, no other weapon

supplying a clue to the mentality of those who were not concerned to keep the war-fever down to the minimum of resentful passion. It was further pointed out in discussion that the story reads like a French one; its syntax being obviously un-German. "Infatuated wretch!" is clearly a translation of a French exclamation.

but Force with which to resist her for the moment, but only for the moment. It was a dreadful calamity—this necessitous recourse to the deeds and decrees of Physical Force — and only deep moral indignation enabled Liberals to overcome their aversion to anything so brutal and crude as war. Their ignorance of military matters was hidden behind a mist of surmises, guesses and vague forecasts. The *Daily Mail,* for instance, was much better informed with regard to actual military moves, tactical, strategical, geographical features of the battlefield than the *Daily News.* The *Daily News* had only vague ideas of why a particular military move was made and generally attributed it to the enemy's being "baffled." It searched, even more assiduously than the *Daily Mail,* for traces of German moral defects, because these discoveries helped it to overcome its twinges of conscience about fighting as the ally of Tsardom. It struggled throughout August and September, 1914, with that twinge, but by the end of September, what with "Louvain," "Malines," "Rheims" and the atrocity reports, it was almost quite happy about the Russian alliance. It wallowed in Germany's immorality. Where the *Daily Mail* brought more roughly generalised accusations against the enemy, the *Daily News* dwelt upon little poignant details of girls with their breasts hacked off ("the poor thing was very pretty, and only about 19, and had only her skirt on." *Daily News,* September 14), and handless babies. It seemed to need these details in order to silence the doubt as to its being right to fight with Slav against German. At bottom it rather worried over it, but with all these proofs of German wickedness it felt that it surely must be all right. It still (September 14) deprecated Force, but it had a sort of shuddering, shame-faced joy at the thought that since Force *was* to be the arbiter, its own side was potentially so much stronger than the enemy. It pitied the enemy: the war was so evidently going to be won by the Entente. Stern fighting would be necessary, but if the sword were in one hand, the Bible, or at least J. S. Mill, should be in the other. There should be no vindictive "crushing" of the enemy after he was beaten, but beaten he must be. "Punishment" and

"reparation" there must be, but always within reason. It was the moral regeneration of the enemy which the *Daily News* sought, whereas the *Daily Mail* did not care what sort of morals the enemy had so long as he came out bottom-dog in the fight. This attitude saddened the *Daily News,* and it was continually making little, excited and flustered attacks upon all who upheld it. It talked a great deal about the need to keep the "moral" aims of the war steadily before the country, lest the New Jerusalem which was to rise from the ashes of the present were to be sullied by mere earthly things. This was a "war for an idea — for the soul of the world" and must never become a "war of revenge." Germany, of course, must be made to feel that she had been criminal, but after she had been chastened, and softened and her militarism taken from her, then, ah then, said the *Daily News,* we really shall have something to say about the moral defects which might be seen within our own camp, forces such as "despotism, autocracy, imperialism, armament conspiracies, rival interests — we shall talk about all these later." (A.G.G. in *Daily News,* September 26, 1914.) "They must be kept out of sight now because we are fighting the common enemy of humanity."

4

THE "REASON" OF IT

This book is not concerned to adjudicate between Liberals and Conservatives from a standpoint of knowledge of the facts which issued in war. Such a standpoint is unattainable at the present moment: years hence it may be reached or at least more knowledge than exists at present may be obtained. All that the foregoing pages have tried to show is the mental conflict presented by the Liberal attitude towards the war and the idealism consequently arising to alleviate that discomfort. It has been shown how, conscientiously, it was impossible for Liberals to support the war unless they shut their eyes to certain considerations of which they had previously been conscious; the comparative simplicity and straightforwardness of the Conservative attitude has also been indicated, owing, it is suggested, to the fact that the Conservatives did not have to make a truce with their consciences. It is not, however, argued that the Conservative attitude was a more desirable one than the Liberal attitude or that it reflected a clearer apprehension of the matters at issue in the war; discussion of such a question is beyond the scope of a book whose aim is the study of war opinions from no other standpoint than the pre-war views of those who held them. Consideration of the respective relations of Liberal and Conservative pre-war views to the truth is not entered upon; the decision as to which of the two sets of opinions contained more truth is best left to posterity, but, setting aside this debateable question, a comparative study of two distinct mental postures has been attempted. Regarded solely as an attitude, the Liberal posture was exceedingly uncomfortable and compared unfavourably with the easy bearing of the Con-

servatives. The Liberals' whole energy had to be concentrated upon maintaining their Liberalism in a predicament. The Conservatives sat at ease, troubled by no fears as to the danger to Conservatism involved by participation in a war after their own hearts. The Conservatives greeted the war with a cheer; they had seen it coming and met it like an old friend. The Liberals had not seen it coming, and when the Conservatives had rumoured its approach they had scoffed at the rumour as "the sinister infatuation of the Northcliffe Press." When it arrived they were in a predicament. Its existence could not be disputed any longer, so its nature had to be changed. "*This is not a war of peoples but of despots and diplomatists,*" proclaimed the Liberals, shifting their difference of opinion with the Conservatives to another part of the ground. "Let us be quite clear in our minds as to the real enemy," they added, and forthwith proceeded to convert the war with Germany into a crusade for Germany's emancipation as well as for the liberties of Europe. The Conservatives welcomed their conversion and had no scruples in adopting their idealistic talk, being, doubtless, if they thought about it at all, of Mr. Chesterton's opinion that they had a right to go into the quarrel, not only with assegai and tomahawk and bomerang and other weapons of civilisation, "even much lower civilisations" than their own, but with any idea that was offered them likely to stimulate popular enthusiasm for killing Germans.

The Liberals saw nothing ominous in the Conservatives' profession of idealism; they no more questioned its sincerity than they saw the war as presenting any kind of obstacle to the achievement of their high aims. The arrogant nature of Liberal idealism lay in its imperviousness to the Conservative view of the war, vividly apparent throughout the pre-war period, scarcely hidden by the cloak of ideals borrowed later; its deceptive nature lay in its persuasion of the Liberal mind that the ideals which, upon its own admission, had failed to prevent the war, could nevertheless, during, and by means of the war, attain such influence as not only to render the war harmless but transform it into an instrument of idealism. The

fact of war registering, as the Liberals admitted it registered, that past failure, made them hopeful, not sceptical, as regards realising their ideals through it as an instrument. They did not realise, though their writings occasionally admitted the fact, that irrationality plays as large a part in the average state of mind provoked by war as its material counterpart, the sword, plays upon the battlefield. Recourse to the one is, in the case of the average combatant, and still more so in the case of the average non-combatant, invariably accompanied by recourse to the other, and the honest rationalist, if patriotism forbids his questioning the necessity for taking up arms, has no alternative but to admit the corresponding supremacy in thought, for the time being, of irrationality. Such an acknowledgment, carried to the point of personal submission to the sway of irrational impulses, has appeared in the recently published letters [1] of F. H. Keeling, who was killed in action in August, 1916. These letters cover not only the war period up to the time of the writer's death, but several years of public work and Continental experience before the war, and his opinions during both periods are expressed with such vigour and frankness as to give the reader a very exact idea of the nature of the "tremendous revulsion" of feeling which, in his case, was produced by the war. A few facts about Mr. Keeling must first be recorded. In his undergraduate days (1904-8), he was a hot-headed, militant Socialist, a passionate collectivist, "caring more for the State than for himself or any human being," a follower of the Webbs and an ardent disciple of G. B. Shaw. Withal, he was an impetuous, restless, amazingly energetic character, enthusiastic for experience and fiercely bent upon "cultivating realism." His innate "passion for facts and truth" soon led him into active Labour work, where his investigations into Child Labour at home and abroad formed the basis of the report of an International Commission of enquiry into that subject. Scornful of academic theories, with a growing appetite for "swallowing formulæ," which he came to consider the bane of schemes for social betterment, he described himself

[1] The Keeling Letters, Messrs. Allen and Unwin, 1918.

finally as a "Liberal-Labour man," one who disbelieved in short cuts and who "honestly believed more and more in the Liberal Party, not for doing anything wonderful, but for helping the country as far as it will go." He was decidedly anti-revolutionist; he admitted that he had not "a very incisive, critical mind" and disbelieved in most of the doctrines which distinguished the Independent Labour Party from the Liberals—"the right to work, extreme anti-militarism, Little Navy and Little Englandism." He was, in short, what most people would call a man of sound common sense — with, however, more impetuosity ("I am impetuous enough for anything — any madness") than most "common sense" people have. He travelled in search of the experience he so desired and wrote long letters home. In 1911 he was in Germany. "I always enjoy the long journey across Germany from England," he wrote. "I travelled most of the way with a Dutchman and knocked some of the rust off my German by talking for several hours with him about the Flushing fortification question, the draining of the Zuyder Zee, the Dutch education problem (the religious question seems very similar to ours), the Dutch East Indies, the strikes at Rotterdam and Antwerp, etc., etc. It seems that many Dutchmen accept the idea of ultimate incorporation in the German Empire with equanimity. I think they are right and I think England should recognise the situation. Surely in the interests of civilisation we must have one central authority from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. It won't extinguish local culture and local sentiment. Holland would be just as well off, it seems to me, if she were in the position of Bavaria as she is now. The incorporation of Holland in the German Empire would mean, of course, (1) that Prussia would no longer have a majority of votes in the Bundesrath (unless this were juggled somehow), (2) that the whole strategic position as regards English and German relations would be revolutionised. Of course, the ordinary Englishman would say: 'We can't have a German Fleet within five or six hours' sail of the English coast.' But it seems to me that the proximity of the German navy would render some under-

standing inevitable. The position would be so intolerable that it could not last.

"It is useless for Radicals of the J. A. Hobson type to go on talking vague internationalism without definitely trying to consider what Germany wants and what is the relation of her wants to the general interests of civilisation. I think Germany should be recognised as the Power which is bound to become the administrator of Central Europe — in so far as a common centralised administrator is necessary.

"Of course, government isn't, and never will be, more than one of the main interests of civilised life. The Germans and the English can govern pretty cleanly as things go. We must to a certain extent think in terms of good government. But it is no more than that. The problem of the administration of Central Europe appears to me as primarily (not wholly) expressible in exactly the same terms as the problem of the administration of Greater London. I don't know enough to speak confidently, but I suspect that the growth of specifically Bavarian art and literature in the last generation has been actually helped by the unification of Germany. It seems to me simply muddle-headedness to say that local culture is necessarily stimulated by complete political independence."

The following year, 1912, while in Switzerland, he wrote acknowledging a copy of the *Nation* which had been sent to him: "I am getting a little tired of the lack of 'Real-Politik' in a lot of the advanced Radical talk about certain questions. There seems to me a lack of contact with reality amongst these Radicals in connection with foreign politics, just as there is among Tories in connection with social questions. I am beginning to understand why we get a reputation for hypocrisy. I detest the idea of war more than I ever did, but we shall never get a world peace organised on a basis of quasi-English Parliamentary Government for every blessed tribe that English Radicals choose to call a nation. I should like to see Europe dominated in politics by England and Germany acting in common, if possible, also working in conjunction with America. At the same time I see that it is very hard for us to get out of the position we are in, whether we need have

got there or not. There is a lot of force in Grey's contention that if we weakened on the Entente with France, we should get a reputation for slippery dealings with our friends which would make it difficult to build up stable relations with anyone. So in the end I reach an almost negative conclusion, pretty well in general support, though not enthusiastic support, of the Government's foreign policy, as it is, except for a suspicion that greater diplomatic skill could have avoided rousing German antagonism. The great thing is to keep the peace somehow for thirty or forty years with as few scares and diplomatic rows as possible; that will in the end produce cessation of the waste of money on armaments, especially if, as is almost inevitable, genuine self-government and genuine education are really developing in every country.

A few days later, September 25, 1912, he wrote:

"These people (the Germans) have not the knowledge of the art of life that the French have, but they are our natural allies in the business of government and organisation. If only a war is avoided, which seems to me more and more probable, we are almost bound to realise that sooner or later. The idea of a war becomes more and more abhorrent to me. England has never had the ghastly experience of a Thirty Years' War, which put Germany back perhaps a century. I think the French are much more likely to bring on a war than we are. The more I think about the whole business the more I distrust them, and the idea of their extending their colonial territory while Germany gets nothing is outrageous."

"I should like, on the whole, to see the power of Austria in the Balkans extended," he wrote on the 4th of October, 1912. "Austria has done a splendid civilising work in Bosnia."

When the war began, Keeling wrote:

30th July, 1914.

"How horrible this threatened war is. Where is the sense of the human race? The only thing is that I don't think it can be argued that capitalism, even the armament firms, are the main force behind it. The big national and racial feelings are

there. One may not share them: my renewal of patriotism [2] doesn't really involve any war cult, but one has to recognise them. The southern Slav movement is the most important of all the national movements in Europe now. I have thought for some time that it would probably prove to be the storm centre of Europe, but I had no idea anything like this was coming so soon. I can't help thinking we and Germany will settle it somehow. I can't believe in the Russians and French politically or strategically. I am sure the Teuton and Anglo-Saxon are going to dominate the world politically. Both from a sentimental and from a logical point of view, I detest our position on the Franco-Russian side."

On Sunday, 2nd August, he wrote from the Isle of Wight:

"I have come down here for a couple of nights to get a little opportunity for peaceful reflections . . . When I reached Basingstoke they gave notice that Portsmouth Harbour was being closed up . . . Today I met a postman on special duty taking round mobilisation notices to Naval Reservists. This morning I heard that Germany had given 24 hours' notice to Russia and France to cease mobilising and to-night there is a rumour that she refuses to recognize Belgian neutrality and has already entered Belgian territory. If so it is all up, I suppose. You know my feelings—my sympathies are all on the other side, except so far as my own country is concerned. I have a sort of secondary patriotism for Germany and it seems to me madness that we should be fighting on the side of the Russian barbarians and the French, who have caused most of the wars of the last three centuries. The best thing that can happen now is for Germany to be victorious everywhere on land and for us to come out top everywhere on sea. We have ourselves no quarrel with Ger-

[2] He had previously written, March 14, 1914: "I find myself more and more substituting a definite love of my country for vague Socialist emotion. . . . I belong to England and next to the whole English-speaking world, and after that to all the Teutonic races of the North. We are the right arm of the world and earth's fighting men—the right sort for Augean jobs."

many now—everyone admits that. And if things were to turn out in that way I think Germany and ourselves would have enough sense to settle the foundations of a lasting peace and keep these quarrelsome, hypersensitive Slavs and Latins in their places."

At midnight on the next day, August 3rd, he continued:

"It is too awful for words. I am still hesitating, but I frankly confess my first emotion at the Liberal peace speeches in the Commons is one of disgust at frank insular pietism. One may be a peace man or a war man, but not a peace man on the basis of these old-womanish platitudes.[3] I have long looked forward to a predominantly Teutonic Central European State stretching from Antwerp to Trieste. I wrote a long letter to the *Nation* on the subject two or three years ago, but I am enough of a Liberal and a Constitutionalist to object to the foundations of such a State being laid upon a blood-and-iron policy. It is not good for Europe or for the Germany which I feel to be my own country after England. It means a ring of Alsace-Lorraines all round the heart of the country and probably a war of liberation in the end. I believe firmly that Russia has provoked this war, and that without Russia's intrigues it might never have taken place. Germany naturally determines to strike as hard as she can and that involves invading Belgium. But the practical inevitability of this first step, given the Russian aggression, doesn't make it any more acceptable. I can't see how we can help going in. It may be that if—as may well be—a deadlock occurs, Germany and France and ourselves will all want to stop and Russia alone will try to keep going. That may hurry on by a decade the Western combination against these ac-

[3] The "platitudes" of the Liberal peace speeches in the Commons were non-interventionist arguments to the effect that no sufficient reasons justifying British participation had been advanced by Sir E. Grey, and appeals to the Government to continue negotiating with Germany with a view to maintaining British neutrality. Prominent among these "platitudes" was the view, advanced by Mr. Keeling, concerning the "madness" of fighting on the side of Russia.

cursed barbarians, Jew-baiters and upholders of gross mediaeval Christianity. They may stand for culture, but they are the enemies of civilisation. Europe, outside Germany and England, has yet to learn the difference between these terms."

Once war was declared Keeling enlisted. The zest with which he threw himself into the new life became, as his biographer notes, abundantly clear from his letters. "It was a real joy to him to throw in his lot with the rank and file . . . he had been talking latterly, sometimes regretfully, sometimes boastfully, of the death of his earlier Socialist enthusiasm, but his eager adoption of the lot of the common soldier, and his unwavering sympathy with his comrades shows the old fire unquenched."

His attitude to the war seems to have been largely determined by his enjoyment of a soldier's life. His reactions were entirely limited by the new, personal experience. Apart from this, he held the war at arm's length, viewing it dispassionately, in no way reacting to certain unpleasant political features of it which he noted, or considering the influence which these might have upon the general situation. As a political disturbance, he took the war very lightly, attaching little or no importance to it as a convulsive influence within the body politic, himself undergoing no change in his opinions concerning a sensible settlement of European problems; as a personal experience, he took it seriously. The personal experience at last grew distasteful, but that fact, as far as the letters show, did not compel any readjustment of his main attitude.

The following extracts are illustrative of the above conclusions:

August 7, 1914.

"I sympathise with the whole of Germany over the Russian danger enormously . . . Of course, one will wait to learn the German version of the whole story after the war, before finally accepting the British version. I still suspect that Russia really is to blame more than anyone, though one can't prove it on the evidence now available.

"Is the world going to come out of this business saner? I am rather depressed about that idea now. It seems that we are perhaps going to learn to hate the Germans. I expect I shall be a stronger Pacifist after the war than any of the people who are pacifists now. I don't feel one will have earned the right to be one unless one has gone in with the rest."

August 26, 1914.

"If the war does go on for a long time it will be queer to turn into a regular professional soldier scouring Europe. But I hope to God Europe will come to its senses, or at any rate that Western Europe will eventually unite against Russia, if things drag on indefinitely."

September 1, 1914.

"I do hope everyone who can enlist will do so, because it would be such a fine thing to beat the Germans with *Freiwilliger*, and it seems that we and the Russians will have to do the beating; the French, as I always thought, are not nearly as tough stuff. I should myself like to see as large a share as possible of the victories fall to us, and after us the Russians. I have no wish to aggrandise the French. The Germans would have been in Paris now if it hadn't been for our fellows. I begin to feel more friendly towards the Russians—it is all absolutely irrational—but I feel the French have let us down and I don't see what title a country which can't defend its own frontiers has to be a first-class Power.

"I can't feel any hatred towards the Germans. Germany will remain my second mother-country always—unless she wins."

Aldershot, September 27.

"Take it all in all, this is a fine life. I feel more and more that all these young fellows will be far finer chaps for the experience, whether we get fighting or not. The worst of it is, I don't see how any system of collective life and discipline could really equal that of a soldier in war time."

Colchester, October 25, 1914.

"I have been picking the best walnuts in the world

from a fine old tree in my garden here. I have got a plan for making an avenue of walnut trees along a private road across our estate. To plant walnut trees is to confer a substantial benefit on humanity and it's a good way to lay out a few pounds. They won't grow up for thirty years, but they will be a sort of memorial of the Great War to a few people, and I daresay there will be a lot of kids in a hundred years' time who will enjoy climbing about them as I climbed about the old tree at the bottom of our garden. So you see I am a whole-hearted sentimentalist now, a real sentimental soldier, and I shan't be jogged out of it by any bloody enlightenment.

"Joan was not the least impressed by my uniform. She didn't seem to know what a soldier meant, but, of course, that is not taught in an enlightened household. I don't mean to be nasty, only I feel the contrast with my own childhood. I daresay the new ideas are right; perhaps if all kids were brought up not to play at soldiers, like good little Fabians, they wouldn't want to play at the same game when they grew up. But then they will never get the particular bite on the apple of life which I have had for the last two months, and, by Christ, I wouldn't change places with them even if I am going to be popped to glory in six months."

Aldershot, November 15, 1914.

"Whatever may be the moral or immoral results of war itself on actual belligerents, training for war in time of war is the greatest game and the finest school for men in the world."

December 5, 1914. From an article by J. H. K., in the *New Statesman:*

"In so far as I think of the future at all it is on my possible experiences as a soldier that I reflect. But I have been too exhilarated to think. I have certainly never in my life experienced more continuous cheerfulness and, in the truest sense of the word, more happiness than in these three months. The sense of physical fitness; the exhilaration of a collective regimental life; the constant opportunities for the formation

of new friendships with men of widely varying experiences; the congeniality of a life which is communistic in just the aspects in which communism is convenient and stimulating; the variety of the work (which does not seem to me personally to lose its sense of freshness and novelty to any extent), and last but not least, the humorous aspects of one's own and one's comrades' activities, all combine to expel the baneful elements of existence. I may possibly live to think differently; but at the present moment, assuming this war had to come, I feel nothing but gratitude to the gods for sending it in my time. Whatever war itself may be like, preparing to fight is the greatest game and the finest work in the world."

May 29, 1915. From an article "On the Eve," in the *New Statesman:*

"I find the social aspects of regimental life in the New Army more congenial than ever. Take a battalion like my own, which is made up of every class from unskilled labourers to professional men . . . I sit down to meals with a brass-caster, a railway porter, a sugar boiler, a brick-layer, an engine-cleaner, an 'oyster man,' a tailor, and several clerks and warehousemen of various types; and there is nothing forced or difficult in the association. We are all 'here because we're here,' as our marching song says. It has been inconvenient at times in the past to sleep in the same tent with a miscellaneous collection of men, a minority of whom were prepared to appropriate, and on occasion did appropriate, one's boots in order to obtain the price of a few drinks. But, on the whole, during the past nine months, I have certainly found life as pleasant as at any other period of my existence and as much, or more, worth living. For there is no doubt that the bugle calls gradually eat into one's soul. The habits of a military communal life become a second nature. After all, the regiment is a home and a mother to us. It feeds us and clothes us and provides us with healthy work, comradeship and opportunities for enjoyable leisure. Indeed, I sometimes think that the ritual of everyday regimental life—the parading of orderly men for rations, or of orderly sergeants

on 'staff parade,' the morning bugle calls of reveillé, retreat and last post, guard-mounting, ceremonial duties and so on —comes nearer than anything else in modern society to that theology—less religion of social ritual about which Miss Jane Harrison writes so convincingly in her 'Alpha and Omega.' It takes the episodes of our daily collective life and gives them a dignity—in fact, almost a dramatic form. And it would be difficult to find a ritual more calculated to call forth in one a thrill of collective emotion than a big ceremonial parade—as for instance, when our brigade marched past the Minister for War the other day in columns of platoons. It may seem ridiculous, but I certainly never in my life felt more wrapped up in the flood of collective humanity than on that occasion. Perhaps I am more of an enthusiast than most, or rather, more conscious of what is happening to me and to those around me; but it is unquestionably a fact that the battalions and even the brigades of the First New Army are no longer mere congeries of men. They have their collective souls. They are more living, corporate entities than any bodies corporate with hundreds of years of history behind them.

. . . . . .

My mind is more alert and keen than ever in my life before. I am nothing of a philosopher in the technical sense of the term, but I find myself continually reflecting on the mysteries of life and time and the reality behind things as they seem . . . If only the war lasts long enough and I don't get knocked out I shall have much clearer notions on these subjects than I ever should have had otherwise. In the second place, all my enthusiasm has come to centre round my connection with my own regiment and brigade . . . This feeling has taken many months to grow up. At first one knew and felt little beyond the restricted circle of one's own platoon. Gradually, first one's company, then one's battalion and finally one's brigade and division became living realities. Nine months ago I enlisted from a number of motives, general patriotism, indignation at the invasion of Belgium, enthusiasm for the principle of nationality, and sheer egotistical adventurousness. But

now all my feelings about my own country and the rights and wrongs of this war seem to have been, as far as my everyday emotional life is concerned, absorbed in the sentiment of my own battalion and brigade. I don't personally bother about hating Germans; and patriotic and humanitarian sentiment only stirs me consciously at distant intervals. The thoughts that habitually rouse me to a desire of coming through this job tolerably creditably are the honour of my own battalion and its opinion of me. Those are now my sustaining motives in this game of war."

Aldershot, May 15, 1915.

"Kitchener inspected the 43rd Brigade a few days ago. We marched past in columns of platoons. I never felt so mad with emotion in all my life. The ritual of the Army beats that of the Christian Church any day. In fact, the ritual of soldiering comes nearer a decent civil religion than anything else I know. It is a queer thing that I should have found the social and emotional environment that suits me best in the Army. I wonder if I could ever find a family an adequate substitute for a regiment. If I do come back from the war I shall want to keep up a bit of soldiering as long as I can. I feel as if I couldn't live for evermore without bugle calls. They have eaten into my soul. Of course, I have experienced all the advantages of war for nine months. Now I am to come up against the horrors—pretty badly perhaps. I get very depressed at this German-baiting and spirit of hatred. I can't help feeling the Germans had something of a case about the Lusitania, for instance, horrible as it may seem, and although I think they were very foolish to sink her."

April, 1915.

"I grow more and more convinced of the rightness of our side in this war, not, I think, merely because I have become so definitely and closely associated with the fighters, but by honest conviction and without any hatred of Germans as such. I don't think an average man can be sure of being sane about this business unless he knows he is going to face death like the rest; this may seem prejudiced, but I think there is

something in it. As the days draw nearer and nearer for going, one gets a more and more realistic sense of values in life, and on the political as opposed to the individual side English liberty is certainly one of them."

Liverpool Merchants' Mobile Hospital, B.E.F., August 11, 1915.

"Well, I hope this bloody war is going to end soon—of course, there is really no chance of that, but the sooner the better. I really think that the sense of relief on the part of millions of fighting men may fire *some* pen—European expression—though one doesn't want to hope for too much. But I do think it will be a bit of a job for the rulers of Europe to get us soldiers all at each others' throats again. I am all for a definite defeat of Germany (we are far enough from that), but I think I am probably a little less *Germania est delenda* than a lot of people at home—not from a desire to see the misery of fighting ended, but from the point of view of the future. There seems to be an awful lot of talk amongst English people of carving Germany up, scrapping her Navy completely, etc. I can't see any hope that way. But anyway, it is too early to talk about that—except in private."

B.E.F., November 11, 1915.

"I see from the papers that the silly, sentimental agitation about Nurse Cavell still goes on at home. A good many soldiers out here don't think much of it. I have discussed it with many and found them all of my opinion—while admiring the woman immensely, I think the Germans were quite within their rights in shooting her. The agitation reveals the worst side of the English character. I hope some Suffragists who prefer to stand for the principle of women's equal responsibility for their actions will protest against the rot that is being talked."

B.E.F., November 18, 1915.

"What are we now fighting for? I prophesy that in a very short time the issues will begin to get narrowed down. We shall begin to see clearly that certain things, such as the utter humiliation of Germany, thank goodness, are out of the

question. I can't see why we should want to shut Germany out of the East altogether, provided that we secure our through route to India. On the other hand, German South-West Africa must remain in our hands. I think a fair criterion is that we must find outlets for German expansion which will avoid the danger as far as possible of Germany clashing with us. Thus Belgium must remain outside her sphere of influence and German South-West Africa must be left in our hands. But I can't see why Turkey should not become a German Egypt, provided that the Balkan States are left genuinely free; and why particularly should Russia be re-established in Poland unless she is going to give Poland real freedom, excluding preferably freedom to bully Jews and Ruthenes? I suppose Germany will have to be kept out of the Pacific, but I don't see why she should be kept out of East and West Africa, but I have no hopes of or seriously a desire for an early peace. We must do something decisive first and also get some definite issue out of the Balkan fighting. I am all against anything like a premature peace. I should not be surprised if Northcliffe proves to be the traitor in that direction in the end. I don't think there is much to be said for *le bon Dieu* after all this. I should think humanism will gain considerably over Theism after the war. I don't think we English will give way to the sentimental revivals as the French are alleged to do. It is not uncommon for officers to keep up their courage on whisky in the trenches out here. I should regard a draught of supernatural religion as an aid to courage in much the same way as I regard the whisky bottle in the trenches.[4] I haven't much natural courage—I did

[4] cf. Extract from Swinburne's letter to Lady Trevelyan, March 15, 1865, apropos of Carlyle's "Frederick the Great." "Trust in Providence somewhat spoils heroism, to me at least. A 'God-intoxicated man,' of course, can fight, but I prefer a man who fights sober. Whether he gets drunk on faith or on brandy it is still 'Dutch courage,' as the sailors call it. I must say Frederick's clear, cold purity of pluck, looking neither upward nor around for any help or comfort, seems to me a much more wholesome and more admirable state of mind than Cromwell's splendid pietism. And, then, who would not face all chances if he were convinced that the Gods were specially interested on

not enjoy the bombing from German aeroplanes which we got in this neighbourhood this morning, but I hope I shall be able to push through, keeping up appearances tolerably without recourse to either physical or mental drugs. One must just try to set one's teeth and think of the credit of one's better self and one's country."

B.E.F., December 1, 1915.

"Thanks very much for *Punch* and the *Cambridge Magazine;*[5] the latter appears to let as much pacifism of a rather bad kind come to the surface as it dare. I don't think it is a journal to be encouraged on the whole. Surreptitious pacifism seems to be its main note. I would not suppress that kind of thing by censorship at all; but when you still feel as I do that you would willingly volunteer over again for the front, even knowing all you do, for the sake of helping to win this war, you cannot exactly love people who are trying to weaken England's resolution. I am sorry that Jane Addam (sic) is on the wrong track. I have always admired her. It is all rot to say we don't know what we are fighting for. We do. Germany set the pace in militarism,[6] though Jingoes in other parts of the country must bear the blame; and we are fighting to show that not the most perfect military machine and most

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his side and personally excited about his failure or success. It is the old question between Jews and Greeks, and I, who can understand Leonidas better than Joshua, must prefer Marathon to Gilgal." "Swinburne Letters," Heinemann, 1918.

[5] The "Cambridge Magazine" published extracts and translations from the Foreign Press reflecting all shades of opinion. As the English newspapers are mainly devoted to bringing foreign militaristic opinion, sometimes of a rather bad kind, to the surface, the "Cambridge Magazine," being concerned to supplement what may be found in the daily press, does not exclude moderate opinion.

[6] The "International Peace Year Book" for 1915 publishes figures, extracted from the Budgets of the respective Powers, from which the following totals are made:

Military Expenditure of the Austro-German Alliance and of the Franco-Russian Alliance respectively:

From 1905 to 1909:

Austro-German alliance, excluding Italy.....£301,610,007

Franco-Russian alliance, excluding Great Britain..£366,015,614

perfectly militarised nation is invincible. Of course, no one except drivelling bishops and stupid professional soldiers imagine that it is a case of black versus white, an absolutely holy war. We are out for our own hand, too—have to be; but it's all rot for pacifists to say we don't know what we are out for. We must definitely prevent German militarism from in any sense being triumphant. To achieve that is to defeat it, and that will take a lot of doing yet. I am against conscription and all for allowing freedom of speech to these Union of Democratic Control and Socialist Pacifists. I confess that I am bitter against them, when I think of good men that I have fought with dying, and these people stopping to whine at home, and I don't want to have anything to do with "————." His attitude simply makes me sick. He complains that I am intolerant towards his opinions; but I do tolerate

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From 1910 to 1914:

Austro-German alliance, excluding Italy.....£381,083,943
Franco-Russian alliance, excluding Great Britain..£476,477,267

Excess of War-Preparation—Expenditure by Franco-Russian alliance over the Austro-German alliance in the Decade, 1905-14 .....£159,798,931

The situation illustrated by these figures was commented upon by Mr. Lloyd George in a speech at the Queen's Hall, July 28, 1908, as follows: "Look at the position of Germany. Her army is to her what our navy is to us—her sole defence against invasion. She has not got a two-Power standard. She may have a stronger army than France, than Russia, than Italy, than Austria, but she is between two great Powers who, in combination, could pour in a vastly greater number of troops than she has. Don't forget that when you wonder why Germany is frightened at alliances and understandings and some sort of mysterious workings which appear in the press, and hints in the 'Times' and 'Daily Mail.' . . . Here is Germany, in the middle of Europe, with France and Russia on each side, and with a combination of their armies greater than hers. Suppose we had here a possible combination which would lay us open to invasion—suppose Germany and France, or Germany and Russia, or Germany and Austria, had fleets which, in combination, would be stronger than ours, would not we be frightened? Would we not arm? Of course we should."

For a later dissection of the myth of the superiority of the military preparedness of Germany to that of any other European country see Prof. Harry E. Barnes' "Genesis of the World War," pp. 54-66 under the heading "Armaments and Preparedness."

them and I don't want the State to suppress them; only it is too much to ask me, as he does in effect, to feel amiable towards a man who definitely disclaims his country and coolly sits and enjoys his income and security under the protection of its civil and military armed forces. And to think that he should live in safety while Rupert Brooke and scores of good men that I know go down before the dice of war. Besides my own turn may come next and I am damned if I am anxious to die."

. . . . . .

6th D.C.L.I., B.E.F., December 23, 1915.

The strange thing in a way is that there doesn't seem to be any limit to what you can make human nature stand. But I do think that after the war there will be a wave of practical pacifism from the ex-infantryman of Western Europe that will sweep many barriers to progress away. I will go on fighting as long as it's necessary to get a decision in this war and show that prepared militarism cannot dominate the world—whatever hell may be in store for me. But I will not hate Germans to the order of any bloody politician; and the first thing I shall do after I am free will be to go to Germany and create all the ties I can with German life. It is the soldiers who will be the good Pacifists—just as every decent Pacifist should be a soldier now, whether he is a German or an Englishman. I dislike Liebknecht almost as much as I do the Union of Democratic Control.

"What a miserable business the Cavell agitation was! I believe a large proportion of the men out here who think at all share my sentiments about it. I have no sympathy with people who *want* to execrate the whole German nation as much as possible. It doesn't help to win the war. Women seem to be particularly bad in this way. I met a lady—a wardmaid in the hospital where I was after Hooge—whose catlike ferocity of sentiments about Germans and Germany simply made me sick. A dose of shelling would cure a lot of that in one. When you are lying at rest and hear a bombardment going on you can't help thinking of the poor devils of infantrymen

in the trenches on both sides with sympathy. You are none the worse soldier or fighter for that."

December 31, 1915.

"Well, I hope you aren't one of these ecclesiastical German-haters. I am sure you aren't. Few Englishmen out here hate their enemies. The Scotch and Irish are, I think, the most ferocious. The "Holy War" idea is Christian cant of the worst kind. It is all rot to suppose that we are white and the Germans black. Don't think I am a half-hearted fighter. I am not. But I loathe this orgy of hatred. The idea of a sort of permanent trade-war after the end of the military war is huckstering beastliness."

B.E.F., January 16, 1916.

"I do not care for the poem you sent me because in the bitterness of things out here I have no use for "God" or for the sentiment that we, in our holy righteousness, are fighting a nation of brutes. I respect the Germans as soldiers, I sympathise with the poor devil of the German infantryman who goes through the same hell as I do in a bombardment, and I see the German point of view about the Lusitania, the Cavell business, and other matters too clearly for the yap, yap, yap of the Press about these things. I am out to do my bit towards inflicting as much as possible of a military defeat on the Germans. I am not interested in exaggerating their infamy."

B.E.F., February 5, 1916.

"I don't see why we should feel annoyed with America. My American friends rather surprise me by their (as it seems to me) excessive pro-British sentiment. I don't blame any neutral for keeping out of this business as long as possible. Of course, if you really believe in the black and white or holy war you can call the Americans cowards; but like, I think, most soldiers, I don't believe in that. Execration is a civilian trade."

B.E.F., March 22, 1916.

"I can't disguise the fact that I am utterly sick of this fighting. Being nearly killed about once in every three weeks ceases to be an "adventure" after ten months; it becomes monotonous."

B.E.F., April 28, 1916.

"No, don't send me that volume of poems. I am thankful that there has been no good war poetry, or very little. There is not much that is poetic about this war. It is bad enough to have to listen to those people who justify war because it gives them a quasi-sensual satisfaction to see humanity crucified after the manner of the founder of Christianity. It would be almost worse to find our intellectual reactionaries—ineligible for the trenches—deriving satisfaction from war as a stimulant of great literature. I am more interested in life than in poetry and I should regard it as a disaster to humanity if really great war poems began to appear. It would imply that war really did express something essential and inevitable in the human soul."

"These letters," writes Mr. Wells in his introduction to them, "are a valuable picture of the state of mind of the English intelligentsia of his time." Whether that remark is true or not, they are certainly more valuable as portraiture of one who "being in" the war, at the outset at least reluctantly, found a different way out from the way taken by other Liberals, than as an exposition of reasonable grounds for the war. They show the effect which the war had upon the writer rather than reveal "the rightness of our side." Keeling's disgust with those people "who justify war because it gives them a quasi-sensual satisfaction to see humanity crucified after the manner of the founder of Christianity" and his alarm lest good poetry should emerge from the war are hardly consistent with his previous feeling of "nothing but gratitude to the gods" for sending the war in his time and his complete satisfaction with the "particular bite on the apple of life" which his soldiering training provided. The greatest game and the finest work in the world, absorbed, as he him-

self tells, all his feelings about his own country and "the rights and wrongs of the war." His sustaining motives were the honour of his battalion and its opinion of him. Other considerations stirred him only at distant intervals. The bugle call entered into his soul and the ritual of the Army gave "a dignity—almost a dramatic form" to the episodes of daily life.

He willingly exchanged the dreary isolation of his pre-war existence for the thrill of collective emotion which a military communal life brought. "Wrapped up in the flood of collective humanity," "too exhilarated to think," his mind felt keener and more alert than ever before. If only the war lasted long enough he should, he declared, have much clearer notions on the subjects of "the mysteries of life and time and the reality behind things as they seem." "The sense of physical fitness; the exhilaration of a collective regimental life; the constant opportunities for the formation of new friendships with men of widely varying experiences; the congeniality of a life which is communistic in just the aspects in which communism is convenient and stimulating"; the variety of the work which never palled, all these things combined to expel the baneful elements of existence, including the disagreeable thought of "the madness of fighting on the side of the Russians." He grew more friendly to the Russians. It was all "absolutely irrational," he said, but understandable since it seemed that we and the Russians would have to do the beating. There was no need to hate the Germans; Keeling found enough emotional satisfaction elsewhere to enable him to dispense with that spiritual aid to courage; there was no need to look upon the war as a holy one, it was enough to be "here, because we're here," as the marching song said. Life, or the war, was worth living without draughts of supernatural religion to make it palatable. He was "a real sentimental soldier," "not going to be jogged out of it by any bloody enlightenment."

His refusal to hate the Germans and "to exaggerate their infamy" was also based, as his biographer reminds us, on a very sincere affection and respect for Germany. His pre-war

"sort of secondary patriotism for Germany" was only very slightly altered by the war. "Germany will remain my second mother-country always—unless she wins." The first patriotism, towards his own country, demanded that reservation—"unless she wins"—in time of war, but, despite the necessity which Keeling felt of fighting Germany and beating her, he did not abandon his pre-war opinions concerning her needs and the importance, if the war was to issue in a sane settlement, of satisfying them, provided Germany's expansion did not "clash with ours." He seems to have regarded the war as an episode in the growth of two great "naturally allied Powers," to be faced unirritably, almost imperturbably, as if there were no reason for fighting at all beyond the fact that they had found themselves unfortunately opposite each other as belligerents. He contemplated no issue of the war beyond the fact that we must be the victors and Germany the vanquished; that conclusion having been reached, things would go on, he hoped, more sensibly than before and a future conflict would be avoided. He discounted altogether any complications and reactions which the war itself might bring, which might prevent return to the mental as well as to the territorial *status quo*. The only reaction which he considered was the reaction against war in general which he thought likely to happen on both sides afterwards, irrespective, apparently, of the decision as to which was victor and which vanquished. He may have thought the Germans so sensible that they would not be troubled by their defeat, so long as they were not humiliated. "I don't expect miracles or a revolution," he wrote, "but I am sure that the German is by nature more peace-loving than the Englishman, and that there will be a great revulsion of feeling in Germany which may overcome even the hopes which the idea of a future naval war with England might contain with some Germans."

It is strange that a student of "Real-Politik," as Keeling set himself to be, should so have disregarded the complex nature of war and its manifold resonances and consequences. His comparative insusceptibility to the emotion of war, in so far as he retained so many of his pre-war views concerning

Germany and refused to idealise the issues of war, is in sharp contrast to the attitude of *Daily News* and *Nation* Liberals. One wonders what his attitude would have been if he had been as keen an individualist as he was a collectivist, had the communistic ritual of military life been less entrancing to him. If the bugle had not called to his soul, if he had found "the particular bite on the apple of life" distasteful instead of delicious, he might have yielded to that idealism which made the war acceptable to other Liberals. His impetuosity, eagerness for experience, enthusiasm for social change, might have made him a follower at a distance of Mr. H. G. Wells. He was enough of an idealist to be afraid of losing touch with reality. While he advocated the "Comic Spirit" and looked forward to "some day when the baser forms of cowardice are extinct, it will become the normal form of cowardice to fear to plunge into the icy pool before her shrine," he had not fully made up his mind whether it was undesirable "to help on social changes by some form of myth." "Sometimes shadows seem as good a basis for emotions as realities," he wrote. Undoubtedly they are. Emotion requires no more substantial basis. Only Reason quarrels with myths.

Reason, moreover, does not stipulate, as Keeling stipulated, that "only those who have gone into war with the rest" have the right to be good pacifists. She asks no sacrifice, unless it be the sacrifice of emotional impulse, from her devotees. If she conflicts with patriotism, well, she prefers the conflict to be acknowledged; she understands the soldiers' song, though it saddens her, "We're here, because we're here, because we're here." Like the Comic Spirit dear to Keeling, she, too, has an icy pool before her shrine into which few are brave enough to plunge. War thins the ranks of her followers; her pool is unvisited, its cold, deep waters stay unmoved by war's storm. Her views are changeless; her mood is eternal; her ideal is truth.

It is commonly supposed that the dictates of reason preponderate in the processes of human thought and in the determination of human conduct. Man, we are taught, is a reasoning animal. That belief is, for the most part, untrue.

The power of emotion in shaping men's thoughts and actions, the futility of logic to upset men's convictions, the extent to which the human mind is ruled by unconscious motives, are among the discoveries of modern psychological research. No truer judgment upon mankind has been passed than the sentence: "They know not what they do." It is, however, an unwelcome sentence to the majority of men. They can so little accept it, they so aspire to be thought rational, that they invent reasons for their thoughts and actions in order to convince themselves that they know what they do and why they think as they do. The process of inventing reasons is known to recent psychologists as rationalisation. Of this process, Dr. Bernard Hart, in his brilliant little book, "The Psychology of Insanity," says:—"The mechanism of rationalisation is most evident, perhaps, in the sphere of moral conduct, where we tend always to ascribe our actions to a conscious application of certain general religious principles. The majority of such actions are the result of habit, obedience to the traditions of our class, and other similar causes, and are carried out instinctively and immediately. The general principle is only produced subsequently when we are challenged to explain our conduct. When the principle and the action do not entirely accord with one another, we amend the former by further rationalisations until it is capable of posing as the explanations of the latter and in this way preserve our ideal of rationality." [7]

[7] Mr. Trotter deals with the same process in his book, "Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War," as follows: "Let us consider the case of a person caught in one of those dilemmas which society presents so abundantly to its members—a man seized with a passion for some individual forbidden to him by the herd, or a man whose eyes have been opened to the vision of the cruelty which everywhere lies close below the surface of life, and yet has deeply ingrained in him the doctrine of the herd that things, on the whole, are fundamentally right, that the universe is congruous with his moral feelings, that the seeming cruelty is mercy and the apparent indifference long-suffering. Now what are the possible developments in such a tormented soul? . . . The problem may be shirked by the easy mechanism of rationalisation. The man may take his forbidden pleasure and endow a chapel, persuading himself that his is a special case, that at any rate he is not

The tendency to "rationalise" thought or action, or, as Dr. Hart elsewhere describes it, to conceal the real foundation of thought by a series of adventitious props, is as characteristic of the sane individual as it is of the insane. Indeed, the insane are frequently less prone to rationalisation than the sane, being satisfied with cruder ways out of that state of mental conflict which is at the bottom of insanity. The dissociation of the mind into logic-tight compartments which is remarkable in the psychology of lunatics, and enables, for instance, the patient who believes herself to be Queen Elizabeth to scrub the ward floor, blissfully unconscious of any incompatibility between her belief and her occupation, does not so completely exist in the average individual. The two conflicting groups of ideas are, in his case, not entirely isolated from each other, they come into contact, but rationalisation provides a medium whereby their incompatibility with each other is hidden. An example of this may be seen in the Liberal argument, "This is not a war of peoples, but of despots and diplomatists. We have no quarrel with the German people . . . No, it is not the people with whom we are at war. It is the tyranny which has held them in its vice. This is a war for an idea, for the soul of the world."

Rationalisation, however, is not always a sufficient means of freeing the mind from the strain of conflict. Sensitive minds, minds disposed to self-criticism, such as Liberal minds,

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so bad as X, or Y, or Z, who committed such and such enormities, that, after all, there is Divine mercy, and he never beats his wife, and was always regular with his subscriptions to missions and the hospitals. Or, if his difficulty is the ethical one, he will come to see how right the herd view really is; that it is a very narrow mind which cannot see the intrinsic excellence of suffering; that the sheep and cattle we breed for eating, the calf we bleed to death that its meat may be white, the one baby out of four we kill in the first year of life, that cancer, consumption, and insanity and the growing river of blood which bathes the feet of advancing mankind, all have their part in the increasing purpose which is leading the race ever upwards and onwards to a Divine consummation of joy. Thus the conflict ceases, and the man is content to watch the blood and the purpose go on increasing together, and to put on flesh unperplexed by the shallow and querulous scruples of youth."

require some further aid to a solution of the conflict. Rationalisation, by itself, does not protect them enough from the pricks of the offending group of ideas or "complex," which disturbs their peace of mind. They need a stronger barrier. They are obliged to resort to "repression." Repression consists in driving the offending complex from consciousness, so that the conflict is avoided. The self-protective economy of war advocates such repression as has been seen in the previous chapter. "Russia figures virtually nowhere in our minds," admitted the student of war psychology in the *Nation*. "She is simply not in the picture. Why not? Because, as history may see it, the sight we have conjured up might paralyse our hearts and for our fighting we need the stoutest hearts that we can muster."

Nevertheless, although the disturbing complex is driven out of the field of consciousness, it cannot altogether be destroyed. Interned in the underground regions of the mind, it is still active and ultimately escapes to the surface of consciousness by roundabout ways, enabling it to avoid repression. Examples of indirect expressions of complexes due to repression are found both inside and outside the lunatic asylum. A very usual illustration referred to by psychologists is that of the elderly spinster, whose sex instincts, denied their normal outlet, succeed, nevertheless, in expressing themselves indirectly in an exaggerated affection for animals or in an unusual interest in births, marriages and scandals. "The solution of a mental conflict by the mechanism of repression is one of the commonest refuges of the human mind," writes Dr. Hart . . . "the essential feature of the process consists in the complex expressing itself along so devious a route that it is enabled to avoid the resistance . . . The mode of expression must be sufficiently indirect to ensure that the real origin of the ideas appearing in consciousness is efficiently concealed from the individual himself . . . The various methods by which this necessary distortion may be attained are exceedingly numerous, and have but little in common beyond the one fundamental factor that they serve to conceal

from consciousness the real origin of the ideas appearing in it."

One of the most important methods by which the repressed complex finds its way back into consciousness is that known to psychologists as symbolisation. The affection for dogs and cats indulged in by elderly ladies is an instance of this method. The Liberals' passionate devotion to peace after the war is another instance. Present Peace being unattainable, despite all their efforts to secure it, Future Peace became the goal of their frustrated ambitions. War had broken out though they tried to prevent it. "It must never happen again" was the prayer with which they turned to the future.

"The mechanism of symbolisation accounts," says Dr. Hart, "for many of the curious phenomena known as "stereotyped actions" . . . 'An old female patient, who had been an inmate of the asylum for many years, spent her whole existence in the performance of a single stereotyped action. . . . All day long she sat in a huddled position, continuously moving her arms and hands in a manner resembling the action of a shoemaker who is engaged in sewing boots. During her waking hours this movement absorbed her whole attention, and it was carried out with unfailing regularity and monotony from one year's end to another. When her history was investigated it was found that as a young girl she had been engaged to be married, and that the engagement had been suddenly broken off. This event occasioned a great emotional shock and she rapidly passed into the insane state which persisted throughout the remainder of her life. It was further elicited that the faithless lover had been a shoemaker by trade."

Probably, if the war had gone on longer, the Liberals, while continuing to support it, would have become completely engrossed in the discussion of a League of Nations; and a future generation, investigating the history of the old Liberal Party, might have discovered with astonishment that in its youth it set its affections on Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform.

Another method by which a repressed complex finds in-

direct expression is that of "projection," whereby the complex reappears, not as belonging to the individual who is troubled by it, but as the property of another person. Illustrations of this method, says Dr. Hart, are given by the cases of "people who possess some fault or deficiency of which they are ashamed" and who are "notoriously intolerant of that same fault or deficiency in others." "Thus the parvenu who is secretly conscious of his own social deficiencies talks much of the "bounders" and "outsiders" whom he observes around him, while the one thing which the muddle-headed man cannot tolerate is a lack of clear thinking in other people. In general, it may be said that whenever one encounters any intense prejudice, one may with some probability suspect that the individual himself exhibits the fault in question or some closely similar fault." Whether or not such a suspicion is tenable with regard to the average Britisher's indictment of the German cannot, of course, be decided by either an English or a German writer—a neutral would be a fairer judge of this question—but the above general statement at least demands that a certain amount of consideration should be given to the retort recently made to British charges by a German writer, Prof. Friedrich Meinecke:

"Without doubt, if this picture of the modern German policy and culture were a true one the entire world ought to rise up in burning indignation and help the English, French and Russians to crush the spirit of barbarism which threatens them. But even while we look at the colours of the picture one by one, and at the palette from which they are taken, we are conscious of curious reminiscences. 'Efficiency' is a favourite English word, it is racy of the English soil. The following has been written, not by a German, but by a Swede (Prof. G. F. Steffen, 'England as a World Power and Culture-State,' 1902). 'The Englishman, be he a peer or a navvy, believes to the utmost in the profound saying "nothing succeeds like success." Wealth and social power are the aims of success as here understood. For the higher cultural talents, for æsthetic, scientific, philosophic and non-conventional moral eminence, English democracy manifests the smallest conceivable under-

standing. The adding of new and unexplored territories to the life of the soul does not generally belong to that "success" which in the England of our time succeeds.'

" 'The simplicity of the English soul,' to quote Steffen once more, 'too often tends to a predilection for rough manual labour, merely physical activity, prowess and athleticism.' We are of opinion that other features, too, of the picture of ourselves as painted by our enemies, resemble the English more than they do ourselves. The bigoted and arrogant belief in the incomparability of one's own culture, which has only to teach others, not to learn from others, is amongst the English more widely diffused and older than with us. ('If there is a people which claims to be God's own people, a people whose aim it is to impose its particular culture upon weaker nations that nation is the English.' Editorial comment in *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant,* January 28, 1915). And if not the theory yet the practice of an unscrupulous policy of power has for centuries had its home in England. . . . Many portraits by painters are in reality self-portraits, and for that reason we say with regard to the description of ourselves which is now current: 'You resemble the spirit which you understand, not me.' "[8] (*Faust*).

That neither Englishman nor German would be inclined to accept a neutral's judgment in this matter unless it agreed with his own is evidence of the distinction between rational and non-rational opinions. The latter are invariably held by their owners with a sense of intuitive certainty and obviousness beyond the possibility of a doubt which reasonable survey of the facts might suggest. They are also accompanied by a warmth similar to that attaching to mystical insight, which rises almost to furnace heat at the approach of argument and seems designed to consume the objector rather than the objections. Rational opinions, on the other hand, are held coldly. Compare, for instance, the subjective temperature of an individual's views concerning the course of the Gulf Stream with that of his opinion, if he be a vegetarian, that it is wicked to eat meat, or, if he be a pacifist like Mr. Wells, that it is not

[8] Deutschland und der Weltkrieg," Teubner, Leipzig, 1915.

wicked to kill Germans. The comparison may be extended to noting the difference in emotional tone between the British attitude towards the devastation of Belgium and that expressed in the *Nation's* cursory reference to the Russian invasion of East Prussia: "The devastation in this province has evidently been wide."

Consideration of these various mental processes and of the innumerable illustrations of them provided by everyday experience and observation is apt to confuse the observer's sense of the distinction which he has been brought up to believe exists between the sane man and the lunatic. His opinion concerning the irrationality of the lunatic certainly remains but, most disconcertingly, it appears that it is not only the lunatic who is irrational. Apparently the average individual cannot maintain that it is his rationality which enables him to live in freedom outside an asylum. The troubles which beset the lunatic are evidently his troubles, too; a great many of his opinions, like the lunatic's, arise through processes which are non-rational in the sense that they do not satisfy the laws of logic. "Are, then, all men mad?" he asks in bewilderment. "But if that is so, why do we talk of sane and insane? Are not sanity and rationality one and the same thing? And if not, what is sanity?"

It must be broken to the bewildered man gently that sanity and rationality are not one and the same thing, and that there is a corresponding difference between irrationality and insanity. Insanity is not a definite entity like influenza. If it were, it would be difficult to explain why the conception of it has varied so much in different periods of the world's history, and why it is now thought necessary to put into asylums individuals who, had they lived in the Middle Ages, would have been considered holy and anointed of God among their fellow-creatures.

The most important distinction between the sane man and the lunatic is the distinction of conduct. His symptoms are more exaggerated forms of mental processes met with in the sane individual, but it is the fact that his conduct is generally anti-social, which in most cases decides whether or

not he shall be sent to an asylum. "The anti-social attribute . . . may be positive or negative in character. Thus a patient may have persecutory delusions which make him an actual danger to his fellows or which lead him to take his own life. On the other hand, his behaviour may be anti-social in the sense that he is incapable of efficiently taking part in the social machine." (Hart.)

The criterion of conduct explains the variation in mankind's notions of insanity. "Dangerous to himself or others" had a different significance in the Middle Ages from its significance to-day. Its significance depends upon the conception of "dangerous," and very little knowledge of history is necessary to realise the fluctuating nature of this conception from year to year, almost in these rapidly moving times from day to day.

It also brings out clearly the fundamental difference between rationality and sanity, for the ideal of rationality does not fluctuate and the laws of logic are unchangeable.

Irrationality, then, is no social detriment provided it does not urge anti-social courses and prevent a man from taking his part efficiently in the social machine. On the other hand, rationality runs the risk of being considered superfluous, and not only superfluous but disastrous, if its dictates conflict with the general opinion of what is dangerous to society. It follows that in war-time, when considerations of national security not only overshadow all other social considerations, but are strengthened by an enormous emotional force which, in a situation of national danger, arises through the operation of herd instinct, rationality must come into line with irrationality if it does not wish to be labelled insane. If it conflicts with the opinions of the majority it is bound to be considered dangerous to society, and rationalists whose opinions are contrary to the general conviction must expect, if not to undergo restraint and imprisonment for their opinions, at least to receive censure and condemnation.

. . . . . .

The question arises: What other attitude could Liberals

have adopted consistent with the claims of patriotism and their pre-war opinions? Could the conflict which the outbreak of war provoked in the Liberal mind have been solved in a rational manner? Irrational solutions, which are not, strictly speaking, solutions at all, consist in avoiding the conflict either by elaborate rationalisation or by repression of the uncomfortable facts. The rational solution would seem to depend first upon the individual's clear recognition of the forces at war within his mind and, secondly, upon his conscious choice and adoption of a line of conduct. For instance, the Liberals might have said upon the outbreak of war:—"The war is upon us. Patriotism forbids our withholding support, there can be no question of our not participating, since we are 'in,' but while we are 'in,' and while we support it, we shall not cease to maintain that *it ought to have been avoided, that a better foreign policy, a more prudent statesmanship would have avoided it; that a mistaken course of foreign policy, pursued over ten years, has led us into the terrible conflict in which we are now engaged,* AND, WHILE WE FIGHT, WE SHALL CONTINUE TO URGE THIS BELIEF." Their support of the war, under these circumstances, would have been conditional, not upon victory for their country's arms—("Being in, we must win")—but upon the triumph of their belief: *"We believe that the conviction that that policy was a mistake will steadily conquer the minds of the English people and that they will one day come to the resolution that it is an error which must not be repeated,"* (*Daily News,* August 5, 1914), and they would, from the outset, have insisted upon the need of pursuing Sir Edward Grey's offer, which came too late to avert war, with a declaration of willingness to negotiate with an enemy who was not, according to their pre-war opinions, an enemy by malicious intent, but an enemy owing to the workings of the system of the Balance of Power, for which, in their opinion, all Powers were equally responsible.

The Liberals adopted no such attitude. Their "reasons" for not doing so these chapters have tried to show. There are, I recognise, many gaps in my chronicle of the Liberal argu-

ment; it has been impossible to follow every current in that wide flood of idealism which, loosed by Liberals, carried this country "with a clear judgment and a clean conscience" through the four years of war. Only a study of its source has been attempted here; its course and end are dealt with in Part II and III of this book.

PART TWO

GETTING ON WITH THE WAR

PREFACE TO PART TWO

(AS FIRST PUBLISHED)

THIS intermediary volume covers the period from the outbreak of war up to the armistice. For its argument I am indebted to the late editor of the *Daily News,* A.G.G. A penetrating sentence of his—"We Lost and You Won"—from an Open Letter concerning the outbreak of war which he wrote to Lord Northcliffe, has been a veritable beacon light to my thoughts. I have no other object in writing this book than to show him and his numerous readers that he never wrote a truer sentence.

The famous Open Letter was printed in the *Daily News* of December 5, 1914. It was provoked by a campaign in the *Daily Mail,* the object of which was to discredit the *Daily News* and other representatives of Liberalism because, before the outbreak of war, they had stood for neutrality. They had been violently opposed to intervention; they had declared that a conspiracy to drag the country into war was being organised by the Northcliffe Press; they had urged that the whole future of England depended on the suppression of that spirit of intervention. "It is war to the knife between it and Liberalism. Either it kills us or we kill it." (*Manchester Guardian,* July 28, 1914.) The *Daily News* had been one of the foremost champions of the neutrality movement. Its pages had been crowded with protests against intervention from leading public men and organisations; its leading articles had been passionately in sympathy with these protests; it had fought until the last moment to keep the country out of the war. It fought in vain. British intervention, as Sir E. Grey's speech on August 3 showed, was inevitable; we were bound by pledges

and undertakings, of which the country had been kept in ignorance, to stand by "our friends." These disclosures made the neutrality movement futile, and Germany's invasion of Belgium carried the country, and with it the Liberals and Liberal Press, wholeheartedly into the war. The Liberals' previous arguments were forgotten; the issue was transformed; the war which "we ought to have avoided," and towards which "it would have been just and prudent and statesmanlike for England to have remained neutral" (*Daily News,* August 5) became a Holy War—a war for Right and Justice, for a New World, and for Lasting Peace. This change of tone and argument is dealt with in "How We Went Into the War."

Lord Northcliffe was unconvinced by this transformation. He distrusted the bellicosity of the Liberal Press. Their abandonment of the pacific creed had come so late in the day. He had seen the war coming for years before it actually started, and he thought that if the Liberals had not been so half-hearted in the matter it might have been all over and done with before 1914. He had never ceased to give warning and to make preparations, while the Liberals had scoffed at and made light of his fears. Every day he pointed out to his readers—those "1,104,000 Who Know Daily"—that he alone had been the true prophet of war, while the Liberals had been the false prophets of peace. He called them pro-Germans; he insulted them; he said they were not fit to be entrusted with the conduct of the campaign. Stung by the taunts, A.G.G., the editor of the *Daily News,* at length turned upon his persecutor and wrote the "Open Letter." Goaded to fury, he spoke frankly, more frankly than he had spoken before or spoke again during the whole course of the war. "Your claim to be the true prophet of the war," he said to Lord Northcliffe, "does not call for dispute." "You say that we prophesied Peace. Yes, we not only prophesied Peace, but we worked for Peace, just as you prophesied War and worked for War. *We lost and you won.*" "It has always been your part to prophesy war and to cultivate hate." "You have been the incendiary of journalism for 20 years.

You have spent your life in an infamous servitude to the changing passions of the hour." "Can you absolve yourself from any share in bringing this calamity upon the world? Nay, do you wish to absolve yourself? Can you not rather claim this war as a tribute to your prescience and to your power? . . . You proclaim to all the world that the most powerful Press in this country worked steadily not for peace but for war. And to that extent you have made us partners with the guilty. That is your claim. That is your boast. And you think to shame us because we do not share your guilt. You are mistaken. We are without shame and without regret."

"We lost and you won!" If the Liberals had laid hold of this sentence, its truth might not have been as applicable to the end of the war as it was to the beginning. If it had thoroughly permeated their consciousness, they might not have been "without shame and without regret" at finding themselves partners with the guilty who had prophesied war and worked for it; at any rate they would not have claimed so boldly throughout the war that their aims, not Lord Northcliffe's, prevailed. They would have questioned constantly whether their ideals, defeated at the outbreak, had any chance of winning at the end; they would have been haunted by the recollection, "We lost and you won," and their idealism would have been tempered. It was not tempered. It was arrogantly confident, overweeningly sure. There has been no more pitiable spectacle in the war than the spectacle of Liberals, at sea in reaction, clinging to the myth that their aims were supreme. The outbreak of war was not Lord Northcliffe's only triumph. Whenever there was a collision between reactionary and Liberal opinion in the Cabinet, Lord Northcliffe won and the Liberals lost. The fall of the Liberal Government, the first Coalition, the second Coalition, the coming of Conscription, the Knock-Out Blow campaign, were milestones in his triumphal progress, which culminated in the khaki election and the Peace of Versailles. The ideals with which Liberals entered the war were insolvent from the start; they reached no end but disillusionment because of this primary insolvency. War is no friend to Liberals under

any circumstances. They would have had a tough fight to win had they entered the war unhandicapped by "partnership with the guilty." Handicapped, and neither ashamed nor regretful concerning that fact, they were bound to lose.

It is doubtful whether the Liberals have learnt their lesson. The *Daily News*, from whose pages practically all the Press quotations in this book are taken, has recently printed ironical articles upon a pilgrim's search for the New World which was to have come out of the war. The irony is at its own expense, for the *Daily News* was more responsible for that myth than any other paper. Because of its large share in promoting and maintaining the idea of the Holy War I have pilloried it and its editor especially. A.G.G. ought not, I am well aware, to stand alone; there are few Liberals, or members of the Labour Party, who can afford to throw stones at him. But his attitude has been typical, typical moreover of the "enlightened Liberal." I am confident that I have done no injustice to the great majority of British Liberals in taking the *Daily News* and its editor as their spokesman and representative.

I. C. W.

Christmas, 1919.

GETTING ON WITH THE WAR

5

SOME ILLUSIONS OF 1914

UNLESS one can recall emotionally the violent seriousness of the first months of the war, the newspapers of that time as we read them now seem rather ridiculous. Events have long since revealed the shortsightedness, the incorrectness of many of the opinions which were then looked upon as oracular; the very vehemence and intensity with which they were expressed seem, in these days, merely to emphasise their absurdity. And now that the terrible emotion of those times has vanished, we pick up the shrivelled opinions and see what it was that made them credible; a laugh takes the place of those hopes and fears which, five years ago, made the opinions worth holding.

In nothing so much as in the idealism regarding the issues of the war do the opinions of the autumn of 1914 provoke our amazement. That idealism arose largely from the necessity of finding reasons for intervention other than those balance of power arguments which had evoked such opposition from the Liberal Press in the days before our actual entrance. The change of attitude on the part of the Liberals, from opposition to the war to support of it, required a transformation of the issues involved. Idealism accomplished that transformation, its note being, of course, determined by the German invasion of Belgium. That act enabled the non-interventionists to come into line with the interventionists with the minimum of mental discomfort. They fell upon its criminality with a

fervour very like that of an embrace, and it would be difficult to decide whether it or the "infamous proposal" inspired the finest passages in their war oratory.[1]

The Liberals were not content to abandon their pre-war attitude silently. The idealism which they so frantically promoted obliged them openly to abjure their previous opinions. The *Daily News,* on August 7, after palpitating with horror and indignation in the wake of Mr. Asquith's "infamous proposal" speech, declared: "We say this in full consciousness of all that we have written in the past. . . . With the facts before us we see that there was no alternative. The Government has gone into this awful slaughter with clean hands and a clear conscience. It has gone into it to save civilisation from the most tremendous peril that has ever threatened it. It has gone in to win."

The issue speedily assumed gigantic dimensions. The innumerable contributors to the theme "What We Are Fighting For" must have ruptured their imaginations in the effort to seize and convey the colossal stakes involved. The solar system alone was left inviolate, but this was probably due more to un-

[1] See leader, "The Premier's Speeches," *Daily News,* Nov. 1, 1914: "No one who heard the first of these speeches, that delivered in the House of Commons when war had been declared and the Prime Minister was at liberty to tell the world the truth, will forget that great burst of indignation culminating in the denunciation of the 'infamous proposal.' It was an indictment that will live in history, not only by reason of its matter, but also by the restrained, yet passionate eloquence of its form. Through the series of impressive speeches which Mr. Asquith has delivered in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales . . . there runs a note of noble indignation at the blow which Germany has struck at the foundations of international good faith."

See also Mr. Lloyd George's speech at City Temple (*Daily News,* Nov. 11, 1914) under chairmanship of Sir W. R. Nicoll, one of the most ardent non-interventionists in the pre-war period. The *Daily News* reported: "Mr. Lloyd George has rarely been more effective . . . in a vivid and brilliant paraphrase of the White Paper, the responsibility was driven home—home to 'the vulture that thought it was pouncing on a lamb and fell on a hedgehog,' and in lowered tones the Chancellor spoke of Belgium." Mr. Lloyd George began his speech by saying: "It is a great wrench for most of us who have during the whole of our lives been fighting against militarism to be driven by irresistible force of conscience to support a war."

familiarity with its graphic features than to respect for its neutrality. Restraining voices suggesting limitation of the terrestrial issue were unheeded. Lord Eversley's argument (*Daily News,* August 20), that a war with the objects of re-forming the map of Europe and crushing Prussian militarism would perhaps take longer than we intended, and cost more than we could afford, was peremptorily dismissed by Mr. Wells, who had constituted himself commander-in-chief of the war to end war forces, as "blank-mindedness," "pseudo sage intellectual laziness," "just that attitude of mind which is most likely to render Liberalism feeble and futile at the present juncture."

Mr. G. B. Shaw, who insisted (*Daily News,* August 11, 1914), that the war was "a Balance of Power war and nothing else" was not, of course, taken seriously,[2] and so the "production" of the war as a great spiritual conflict between the forces of Good and Evil went on. "We have our faces turned towards the light," wrote A.G.G., of the *Daily News,* on the occasion of the Premier's famous Guild-hall speech (September 4.) The light that never was in European politics blinded this happy warrior to every fact of the case but Germany's Belgian misdeed, and dazzled him into the belief that in destroying the German idol of Force "we shall not only liberate Germany from its evil genius, but we shall drive out that genius from other lands where the exam-

[2] Later, in November, Mr. Shaw published his "Common Sense About the War." Its effect upon the idealist was frankly admitted by Mr. James Douglas in the *Daily News* of Nov. 17. It gave him, he said, "such an awful sense of spiritual desolation" that he was filled with a passionate desire to go to New York, presumably to revive his soul. Though, however, he controlled himself sufficiently to stay in England, he was reduced to writing the following passage: "The moral and spiritual condition to which I am reduced is for me staringly obvious that the Shavian sophistry is a deadly poison." Mr. Shaw, he said, had left him nothing to believe in: "his corrosive casuistry ate the very heart out of my faith, the very soul out of my enthusiasm. He made me feel that for three months I had been living in a cardboard castle of delusions." Mr. Shaw was "a dealer in moral poison which would destroy our souls if we were to absorb it and retain it." Fortunately for Mr. Douglas's soul he was able, after the first taste of Mr. Shaw's Common Sense, to spit it out.

ple of Prussia has given it root. Humanity is going to pay a great price, but not in vain . . . the reward is its liberty and a larger, nobler life."

With such temperatures, it followed that any mention of a negotiated peace with the enemy was at that time anathema to the idealists. Some idea of their resolute mood may be got from the angry letters (*Daily News,* September 19), in answer to the principles of settlement recently published by the Union of Democratic Control. One F. G. Thomas wrote: "We are still so far from the end that one is reluctant to speak of terms of peace which cannot be the subject of negotiation, but will be imposed by the victors, as we hope, at Berlin." Mr. Massingham, the editor of the *Nation,* also contributed an article on this date (*Daily News,* September 19), entitled "A Fight to a Finish," apropos of Germany's proposals to Washington that she would be prepared to accept a "drawn" conflict. Mr. Massingham was very positive that a draw would leave the brutal Prussian militarism undefeated. "If there was real danger from the spirit which has mastered Germany, it cannot yet have been exorcised. If there was none, then the war was unjust and unnecessary, and should be stopped to-morrow." He drew a profound distinction between war for revenge and war for an idea. "Germany must pay, and pay heavily, but no one seeks to make a Belgium of her. . . . It (Germany) will be there—in its place—softened, one hopes and believes, by a displacement of Prussian autocracy."

A week later the editor of the *Daily News* addressed the Allies on the vital necessity of "holding together," it being, he divined, the Kaiser's one hope to divide them. "Therefore, above all things," he urged, "the Allies must not quarrel . . . it is important to avoid all the old subjects of embitterment. Those of us who have worked for the overthrow of Russian despotism in the past must hold our tongues and pens. . . . Let other things wait." His advice was followed; all the old subjects of embitterment between the Allies were avoided, and the Secret Treaties bear witness to the steps which were taken to bind the Allies together.

Further, on October 1, 1914, Mr. Arnold Bennett wrote

an article in the *Daily News* foreshadowing and favouring the Knock-out Blow. "A lesson for Potsdam," he declared, was "imperatively needed." "Stupid bullies" (the article laid great stress on the stupidity of Germany) "should be treated according to their mentality. . . ." "Nothing will impress the Potsdam mentality so much as a public humiliation. . . . Many a savage brute has been permanently convinced of the advantages of civilisation by the idiom of one knock down blow."

It must be remembered that at this stage of the war, alongside the tremendous resolve to do the job of crushing Prussian militarism thoroughly, there existed an equally high spirited belief that the job would not take very long. In the above article, for instance, Mr. Arnold Bennett did not "see how the war could last more than six months beyond the end of the year," his reason for not seeing being that "the Kaiser, despite his kinship with Deity," could not "create men nor extract gold coins out of an empty hat." A week after the outbreak Mr. Massingham had prophesied that "we should win probably without great losses," and this confidence undoubtedly assisted the Liberals to draft such an extensive programme of the reforms to be achieved through the war. The confidence in an early finish was sustained throughout the autumn of 1914, and it is nowhere more apparent or more cheerily conveyed than in the *Daily News'* bright pages. There were headlines to the chatty columns from correspondents at the front as follows: "Kippers for Tea," "Toothache in Trenches," "Keenness to go to Berlin," "Joyous Volunteers," "The Merry War in the Argonne," "Chaff for which the Enemy Paid Dearly," "The Lieutenant's Morning Tub."

The main ground for the Liberals' confidence (apart from "the invincibility of their cause," and the fact that having gone to war with a Goliath for the sake of a David, it would undoubtedly be proved that the weak things of the world had been chosen to confound the great) was belief in the "Russian Steam Roller." "In boldness and breadth of conception," wrote A.G.G., "the Russian strategy is easily the most impressive thing in the war." . . . "The success of that strategy

in Poland . . . has finally convinced the Western world that military genius of a remarkable quality is in command of the Russian campaign." "Great Drive in Poland," "Russians Sweeping the Germans Out," "Victorious Russian Armies Invade Germany," these were some of the headlines from day to day, and, in addition, eulogies of "The Russian Spirit" abounded. Characteristics which were wicked and dangerous when displayed by the enemy became subjects of pride when possessed by our Allies. In the *Daily News*, of October 7, 1914, A. Montefiore Brice, descanting upon this "Russian spirit," said: "Patient, modest, simple, with a huge capacity of moral endurance, he (the Russian) stands out individually as a fit antagonist to the emotional German with his flamboyant valour. As to his sublime and unquenchable faith in his race, all I can say is that Germany and the German simply do not count when the Russian looks out beyond his country. For Russia, he will tell you, with quiet certainty, will be a great nation when Germany is forgotten." What strange megalomania, born of the teachings of Nietzsche, Treitschke and Bernhardi, this "sublime and unquenchable faith in his race," was declared to be when exhibited by the Hun! Another unfailing source of exultation was the supposed miscarriage of the German plans. The Germans, it was argued, were already defeated because they had not achieved immediate victory. First, they had thrown "the cream of their army into the whirlwind attack upon Paris." All this was wasted, and now (October 4) their army "has been made up by Landwehr and Ersatz men, troops of an extremely inferior quality," whereas the Allied armies remained "practically intact." Besides, the Germans were being hopelessly beaten by the Russians. "The war on two fronts has utterly broken down, and not even the wonderful railway system of Germany can put army corps into two places at once." The *Daily News* concluded that the German General Staff must be in "an abyss of perplexity." Signs of exhaustion among the enemy were noted early in the autumn. "German Lack of Food," "Old Pattern Rifles in Use," "Hungry Army," "Untrained Men Flung at Allies" were *Daily News* headlines in October. At

the beginning of November, surveying "three months of the war," A.G.G. was able to report that the Kaiser was disillusioned, his dream was shattered, the legend of the Prussian helmet had passed. And if the military failure had been emphatic, not less conspicuous, declared the writer, had been the political failure. Germany had begun the war fortified by the most amazing delusions. She had believed, for instance, that England would not fight. (A belief, it should be noted, shared until the outbreak of war by A.G.G. himself!) "It was a fatal miscalculation." "The Prussian mind could not grasp the idea of English liberty." "Broadly viewed," continued Mr. Gardiner, the war on land had been a record of uninterrupted disaster for Germany. "At the end of three months she is on the defensive at every point, always retreating, always suffering from the attrition of war. Her military prestige is fatally stricken. Her methods are found to be false. She is estimated to have lost one-quarter of her men without having achieved a single object she had in view. Her Navy is in hiding, and the Seven Seas are closed against her commerce." Finally, and most satisfactory of all, the judgment of the world had passed a verdict on her.

The generally prevailing optimism in Liberal ranks is again reflected in the *Daily News* leader upon the opening of Parliament (November 12). "The spirit in which Parliament reassembled yesterday was in marked contrast to that in which it separated two months ago. There was as little doubt then as there was yesterday as to the ultimate outcome of the war; but there was deep anxiety as to its course and duration. The events that have taken place in the interval have sensibly diminished that anxiety. The Allies have got the measure of the enemy, know the worst that he can do, and are satisfied that the failure of his schemes is final and irreparable. Mr. Asquith went so far as to hint that the war might not be prolonged as was anticipated, and this note was also struck by Mr. Bonar Law. It may be that he had in mind not merely the military factors, which we believe are even more satisfactory than is generally supposed, but also reasons for knowing that the enemy recognise the gravity of the outlook, and

are putting out discreet feelers for terms with some of their foes. These efforts will not succeed. Apart altogether from the precautions taken to prevent any dissolution of the Allies, the sense of the menace which German aims and German militarism constitute is too imperative to allow any weakening of the bond."

This cheerful outlook enabled the Liberals to affect at times the utmost good humour towards the enemy, and to flatter themselves that their aims for his ultimate good were unspoiled by hate. When dealing with the capture of the Emden and its captain, Von Müller, A.G.G. was overjoyed to relate the admirable temper which he and his fellow countrymen observed over that episode. "When the news came to me that the Emden was destroyed I said 'good business,' and the small boy who was with me burst into a shout of laughter, partly at the novelty of the phrase—for he always says 'good biz' himself—and partly because he shared the feeling. But though I rejoiced that the Emden was sunk, I rejoiced, too, that its captain was saved. And that, I think," he said, heartily, "expresses the truth about all of us." "What is good in Germany," he added, benevolently, "we admire and want to preserve. What is evil in her we mean to destroy." There were blessings in store for Germany when we had winnowed the good from the bad. On November 7, Mr. Eden Phillpotts contributed a poem to the *Daily News* all about how really beautifully we should behave to Germany when we had exorcised her evil genius. The poem ended:

> And our revenge shall be to bid you hear
> Ineffable music from the olden time;
> Symphonies that ascended, sweet and clear,
> Making men's hearts like bells together chime
> The Pæan of Humanity that rolled
> To us from you on ancient harps of gold.

. . . . . .

In many ways the Conservative newspapers read much less farcically than the Liberal ones. From the Arcadian idealism of the *Daily News* we turn to the *Daily Mail* of the same

date, and the world it reveals to us is far more like the world we know now. The language of idealism is certainly there, but it is accompanied by so much plain speaking that we easily recognise its ornamental function, and are in no danger of attaching vital meaning to it. The plain speaking, moreover, has nothing impromptu about it, but is clearly expressing convictions so long held that the war appears merely as a handy illustration to them and as a demonstration that the Conservatives in prophesying and preparing for it were irrefutably right. According to these convictions the enemy's immediate wickedness was small compared with the diabolical nature of his deep-laid plans, the roots of which went far back into history, the harvest of which would undoubtedly synchronise with the end of civilisation. There could be no question of reforming or chastening so Satanic a monster; the Hun, yesterday and to-day and for ever, being incarnate evil, had to be wiped out; *delenda est Germania* was the only possible battle cry. Those who thought otherwise were obviously pro-Germans.

Temporary miscalculations of the situation, of course, abounded in the Conservative as in the Liberal Press. For instance, on August 6, 1914, under the headline, "Great German Reverse at Liège," the *Daily Mail* stated "all the enemies' plans failed at the outset. Thus signal punishment has already followed upon the wicked act of aggression." Liège, however, fell to the Germans the next day. On October 9, the day Antwerp fell, the headlines were: "Antwerp will Hold Out. Strongest Fortress in Europe." [3] Such miscalculations were, to a great extent, due to the reticence of the Press Bureau.

There was the same belief in the Russian steam roller: "Before many weeks have passed 4,000,000 Russian troops will be sweeping through German territory on Berlin," [4] said

[3] On the 10th October, Antwerp which, the day before, had been described as the "strongest fortress in Europe" became "the hapless city," whose bombardment was said to be "one of the greatest crimes" which the Huns had perpetrated.—See *Daily Mail* Oct. 10, 1914.

[4] Cf. *Daily News,* Oct. 1, 1914, photograph of Tsar at head of his

the *Daily Mail*, August 28, 1914, not for the first or the last time, and it felt such certainty as regards the Russians' "victorious and locust-like advance" that in October it gave a forecast of their peace terms. (See "Peace Terms of Conquering Russia," October 17, 1914.) There were the same sanguine references to the "Worn-out German Army" and "Hungry People," on September 14, the discovery of "30 Germans asleep in a barn" warranting the headline, "Utter Weariness of the German Infantry"; the same eye for choice illustrations of British morale (see *Daily Mail*, September 18, "Loyalty in the Prisons," "Convicts imploring to be allowed to work overtime to provide Army requisites") the same advertisement of the good sport afforded by the war.[5] But despite these likenesses between the two newspapers, pointing to the identity of the Conservatives' and Liberals' reactions to the superficial aspects of war, the outspokenness of the one, and the evasiveness of the other, stand in sharp contrast. As we look at them both to-day the *Daily Mail* does not astonish us; but the *Daily News* is as grotesque as Hudibras.

From the beginning of the war the Conservative newspaper translated "what we are fighting for" into perfectly concrete terms. "Trade we can take from Germany"[6] appeared as a headline in all of them early in August. Other things beside trade were suggested, "To capture or destroy the German fleet, to possess ourselves of several naval posi-

troops, with legend. "It has been announced that the Tsar is to take the field at head of army of 5,000,000 men with which Russia is to crush the German resistance."

[5] "It's fine sport—great sport up there!" *Daily Mail*, Oct. 5, 1914, draws attention to this "electrifying expression" from a young soldier which, it considered, revealed "in a flash the temper of young England." "There's no target like the Germans! They come in bunches of nine or ten and we sweep 'em away."

[6] Also Patents; see *Daily Mail*, Sept 14, "the first step in a particular attempt to capture that part of the trade represented by the very valuable patented and trade-mark articles begins to-morrow and is worth the closest attention of British manufacturers." This pioneer adventure was undertaken by the British Milk Products Co.

tions, Gibraltars of the future which shall command the North Sea littoral from Holland to Denmark'' was one out of many of the aims indicated by Sir J. Compton Ricketts in his article (*Daily Mail*, September 4, 1914), ''Perseverance, Pluck and Payment.'' On October 16 the *Daily Mail* recorded: ''Togoland is already in our possession. German Samoa fell to a New Zealand Expeditionary Force on August 29. On September 11 an Australian squadron occupied New Pommern, in Bismarck Archipelago. The Japanese are attending to Kiao-chau and Tsingtau, and in East Africa lively fighting is reported. . . . German East Africa, especially, with an area of 400,000 square miles, will pleasantly fill in the solitary gap in the continuity of British possessions between Cairo and the Cape. In the Pacific, too, there are many islands that it will be an act of charity to relieve Germany of.''

It was probably because the Conservatives had such clear ideas as to the meaning of *Delenda est Germania* that they recognised, earlier than the Liberals, that the war would last a long time. Warnings against over-confidence were frequent in the Conservative Press, even in the early days of the war, and before the month of August was out the Northcliffe Press had started its Conscription Campaign. ''Some kind of National Service is imperative,'' said the *Daily Mail,* August 27. ''We must be ready to spend the last man and the last shilling unless we are prepared to see Potsdam dominating Europe. We want more men, we want more men now, and we want them on a scale which the nation does not at present in the least recognise. . . . Our political system has not in this century brought us sufficiently into touch with the stern realities of existence. We need to make an effort comparable to that which the Germans are making. How long shall we wait?''

We waited, it will be remembered, months before adopting Conscription as a result, it is generally admitted, of propaganda for Compulsory Service carried on in the Northcliffe Press. The strongest supporters of Voluntaryism cannot, however, deny the assistance given by the Conscriptionists to the Voluntary Recruiting movement. They gave of their best, in

prose and verse, to the business of whipping up recruits. The task was made easier by the issue through the Press Bureau of the Belgian Commission's reports on atrocities, and the special correspondents of all papers lent willing hands and pens. The response to these appalling stories was so valuable to recruiting that it may be said that if the Belgian atrocities had not happened it would have been necessary to invent them. The raid on the East Coast towns, later in December, also gave an enormous spurt to recruiting. "It had the effect of a powerful stimulating tonic," said the *Daily Mail*. "Everyone rejoiced at the thought that at last the war would be brought home to thousands of people." "You will see the country wake up now," one heard it said. Miss Jessie Pope immortalised the awakening in the following poem (*Daily Mail*):

"Young Brown's repast was growing chill
Though he had only just begun it.
He glared and said, 'The Castle Hill . . .
That's done it.'

War hadn't touched him up to date;
He'd cheered his pals who went in batches,
Yet still paid sixpence at the gate
At football matches.

But Scarborough! He loved the place.
That happy haunt of summer revels,
Bombarded! Blood rushed to his face,
'The Devils!'

Those Yorkshire women lying dead!
The news grew blurred—he tried to skim it,
Then rose. 'This is,' he calmly said,
'The limit.'

To the recruiting shop down town
He strode—he almost seemed to run it.
'I want to dot them one,' said Brown.
'That's done it.' ''

Mr. Winston Churchill, who first hit upon the epithet ''The Baby-killers of Scarborough,'' ''speaks for the whole nation,'' said the *Daily News,* and A.G.G. devoted his Saturday sermon that week to ''The Kaiser and the Raid'': ''War and the Criminal,'' with sub-headlines, ''The Wild Beast'' and ''The Punishment.'' Both the Kaiser and the Crown Prince—''if guilty''—were ''to be tried,'' pronounced Mr. Gardiner, his emotion leading him to reverse the usual order of procedure in these matters, guilt being generally decided after, not before, trial.

The same conviction inspired the attitude of the Liberal Press towards the various documents dealing with ''origins'' that were constantly being published. The French Yellow Book, Sir E. Grey's ''shattering'' replies to charges brought by Bethmann-Hollweg in the Reichstag and Press interviews, in which the German case was put forward, served only to fasten the guilt of having planned the war more conclusively upon Germany and the Kaiser. An interesting feature of these discussions, from the psychological standpoint, was the way in which the Liberals resorted to Conservative arguments in order to overthrow charges (now being brought by Germany) which in pre-war days they had themselves advanced in criticism of British foreign policy.[7] The same debate and the same

[7] For instance, a pre-war Liberal might have said, as Bethmann-Hollweg said (Dec., 1914) in the Reichstag, that Germany's desire to arrive at an understanding with France and Russia was baulked by the Dual Alliance and the Triple Entente which grew out of it. He had hoped, he said, that the growing power of Germany would compel England to see that a peaceable arrangement was preferable, but though England was willing to come to an understanding with Germany on individual Far East questions, the first principle with her always was that Germany's free development must be checked by the Balance of Power, and while negotiations went on England was always thinking of strengthening her relations with Russia and France. The war Liberal, A.G.G., who answered this speech with the retort

arguments that had passed, in pre-war days, between Liberals and Conservatives, now went on between the Liberals and Germany, but it was the Liberals who maintained the arguments of their old opponents.[8] The Liberals deliberately fostered the theory of Germany's sole responsibility for the war, not only as regards the actual outbreak, but as regards pre-war diplomacy. They were morbid in their absorption in German guilt. They could not leave the subject of "origins" alone, but were for ever turning to it as if in search of a stronger argument than they already had in order to justify their support of the war. "I find the old controversy cropping up," wrote Mr. Massingham, the editor of the *Nation*, as far on in the war as January, 1915. "Was it (the war) inevitable? It is a piteous thought." There were, he continued, so many ways of looking at it; nevertheless, if we were to arrive at light on the catastrophe, we had to keep to "certain broad lines."

How broad the lines of Mr. Massingham's way of look-

"Ah, but it was the menace of the sea which stood between us and Germany" (*Daily News*, Dec. 4, 1914) might have been Mr. Leo Maxse. For in pre-war days it was precisely that menace which was treated by the Liberals as unreal or as arising out of jingo tactics here.

[8] Without, however, winning favour from the Conservatives. Despite the Liberals' conversion to pre-war Conservative views, they were invariably labelled "pro-German" by the Northcliffe Press and *Morning Post* on the ground that they had in the past repeatedly voiced opinions now being advanced by Germany. The charge of pro-Germanism was particularly connected with the Liberals' repudiation in pre-war days, of the theory of the inevitability of war with Germany. The Northcliffe campaign against the "Cadbury" Press was run entirely on this cry. See, for instance, *Daily Mail*, Feb. 25, 1915, proclaiming its own foresight (a daily proclamation, by the way) and commenting: "The only result of these warnings was to produce continuous and violent abuse of Lord Northcliffe and his newspapers from the pro-German Press, especially the *Westminster Gazette*, a journal which has a minute circulation but which repeatedly voiced the opinions of the Germans as well as those of the British Liberal Government during the long years when certain Radical newspapers and Radical politicians were stopping the progress of the Navy, Army and Aircraft. This same *Westminster Gazette* is to-day condemning the *Daily Mail* agitation for a complete air service."

ing at it were may be seen from the picture which he then sketched of the pre-war character and policy of this country.

"The one (England) was a commercial and sea-faring Power that during a hundred years had played a subordinate part in one European war in which it had no direct interest. It had its Jingoes, but they were a class, with a vulgar Press as their medium, not a dominating natural type. It wanted to keep its own, to consolidate its outer fringes of possession. But it had no theory of world-power or of the need to impose its forms of civilisation on other nations whose ideals and institutions were already in being. Such an idea was alien to its character and indeed incomprehensible to its shy and often self-distrustful egoism. Its sea power was formidable, but its menace to other trading communities was held in firm check by the doctrine of the open port. Its real European policy was one of isolation, tempered by occasional, romantic, and not always discreet interventions. And when, after long hesitation, it reopened a way to Continentalism, the door was still left half ajar. Towards Germany, indeed, it held no entirely consistent attitude. The menace of the German Dreadnoughts touched it to the quick. But the sentiment at bottom was one of genuine fear. If sea power went, what was left? And why this novel apparition of a double dominion stretching over land and water? Ever then a great party strove to avert the coming tension and to give Germany's expansionist policy outlets far beyond her wide European boundaries. Before the war broke out, this party had deflected some sharp arrows flying between the two States. Germany had practically gained a free hand for her darling railway policy in Asia Minor. And there is little doubt that had she willed she might have had the sharp point of the *Entente* diverted from her western border. What was Germany's response? Let me try and state it fairly. She knew the placable character of our people and especially of the Liberal-Labour public. . . . An Anglo-German amelioration might have taken several forms. The race in Dreadnoughts could have been slowed down. . . . Britain

was willing: any man who had his hand on the national pulse in 1913 and 1914 knew that she was more than willing."

This picture of Great Britain deserves to be set alongside the sketches which are to be found in Little Arthur's "History of England."[9] The jolly, go-as-you-please seafaring Power, with its fleet, shall we say, of fishing smacks, wanting nothing but to keep its own, and shy of interfering with the ideals and institutions of other nations. It had a few Jingoes—what country hasn't?—but these were quite harmless and had always been kept in order by its placable people, and especially by its Liberal-Labour public. Towards Germany, it is true, there had been a little anxious feeling shown on account of the Dreadnoughts, but allowance must, after all, be made when the sentiment at bottom is seen to be one of genuine fear of interference with its plans for the greater happiness and freedom of the world, so much of which already belonged to it. Still even then the great Liberal Party, which happened to have been out of office previous to 1906 for twelve years, and had during Lord Rosebery's Premiership (1894-5) been even more Jingo than the Conservatives, did their best to clear the air and to prevent Germany from being shut out of railway enterprise in Asia Minor. What was Germany's answer to this novel apparition of British generosity? She knew, for Lord Fisher has told us, the implacable nature of our First Lord of the Admiralty. Her correspondence with him did not augur well for a slowing down in the race in Dreadnoughts.[10] Was Britain willing for an Anglo-German *rapprochement?* It depended upon whether the national pulse was felt to beat in the friendly sentiments of Mr. Massingham and his Liberal companions or in the truculence of the Jingo press. Genuine fear on the part of Germany may have accounted for her supposition that when

[9] "I have told you how England has taken whole countries under her care to administer justice to oppressed people. . . . I should like you to look at the map, my dear Arthur, and see how much of the world belongs to England. I do not want you only to feel proud that she has so many possessions but to feel thankful that she has been able to carry Freedom and Justice into so many distant countries."

[10] See "Memories," by Lord Fisher.

we gave our moral support to the Triple *Entente* our real European policy was less romantic than the Liberals tried to believe; and the half-open door may have baffled her, as it baffled the Liberals, until it was flung wide open, after long hesitation, upon the path of Continentalism and European war. To the disillusioned reader of 1919, it seems incredible that such a distorted version of events as that given above could ever have been put forward by a Liberal journalist—one, moreover, distinguished, in the years before the war, by the acuteness of his criticism of British foreign policy.[11] But this passage is only one of many testifying to the power of the idealism which made the war supportable to Liberals. That idealism provided not only support but enthusiasm. We should ill reconstitute the Liberal attitude during the autumn of 1914 if we forgot the enthusiasm. The war was as popular with Liberals as with other parties. It was not only an experience to be borne, but to be enjoyed for the sake of all the good that was to come out of it. Further, the Liberals, like all men, were not insensitive to the mere excitement of war. Some of them, also, were glad of an opportunity of proving to those who had once taunted them as pacifists that they, too, could enjoy a war with the best of the Jingoes, so long as it was a perfectly good war and they could go into it with clean hands and a clear conscience. P.W.W., the Parliamentary correspondent of the *Daily News,* wrote upon the death of Mr. Illingworth, the Liberal whip, in January, 1915: "No man was more devoted to peace, but he was one of those persons who, if war should break out, wanted to be there to see. He fought in South Africa. Towards Germany he was pacifist until, as he thought, Germany had betrayed pacifists, and then his straightforward judgment, quite incapable of mental trickery, drove him to a wrath which took the form of an intense determination to subordinate every resource of his

[11] The *Nation* was the fount of criticism of British foreign policy in pre-war days. From 1911 onwards it never ceased to point out the ominous ends to which Sir E. Grey's conduct of affairs was leading, and even after the outbreak of war it admitted that what had happened was "the fatal consequence of the pursuit of the Balance of Power." (See *Nation,* Aug. 9, 1914.)

department to recruiting. Belgium and her sorrows stirred him still more deeply, and the language of the Emperor drew from him the bitter phrase, 'the blasphemous bully of Potsdam.' '' There were plenty of Liberals like Mr. Illingworth. War touches the same quick in men of all parties, and in this war Liberals were proud to show that they could fight and recruit and use strong language about the Kaiser even though they had once been devoted to peace. Their past record dogged their footsteps and ruined their career as warriors. The Conservative Press pursued them with taunts as to their ''pro-Germanism,'' because, as it frequently and quite correctly pointed out, their pre-war opinions concerning Anglo-German tension had been in striking accord with the justificatory arguments now put forward by Germany. Despite their recantation of their former creed they were unable to conquer their old opponents' distrust. The Northcliffe Press never ceased to advertise the Liberals' pre-war neglect of the coming danger and their own foresight, and used this argument to discredit the Liberal administration and finally to drive it from office.

During the first months of the war there were no traces of spiritual disillusionment among the Liberals. They grew less optimistic as regards a speedy victory, but they relinquished none of their expectations of the bountiful spiritual harvest at last to be reaped. The Christmas truce [12] between

[12] Letter from a London Territorial, printed in the *Daily News:* ''Last night, Christmas Eve, was the weirdest stunt I have ever seen. All day the Germans had been sniping industriously with some success, but after sunset they started singing, and we replied with carols. Then they shouted 'Happy Christmas' to us, and we replied in German. It was a topping moonlight night, and we carried on long conversations and kept singing to each other and cheering. Later they asked us to send one man out to the middle, between the trenches, with a cake and they would give us a bottle of wine. Hunt went out, and five of them came out and gave him the wine, cigarettes and cigars. After that you could hear them for a long time calling from halfway, 'Engleeshman, kom hier.' So one or two more of our chaps went out and exchanged cigarettes, etc., and they all seemed decent fellows. We had candles all along the tops of the trenches and so had they. It did seem weird, for behind their trenches there was a house

the soldiers appeared to them as a token of the first fruits. "One is tempted to believe," said the *Daily News*, apropos of the fraternisations, "that out of all the tears and blood some better understanding and some cleansing of the human spirit may arise." If that journal had not been so prostrate before the ideal of the Holy War it might have seen that the understanding was there already, and that it was the truce, not the warfare, which had brought it out of hiding.

The idea of a short war lingered in the Liberal mind until the beginning of 1915. In the *Daily News*, on January 1, A.G.G., as a New Year's task, inaugurated a fund for replenishing the devastated lands of Belgium with seeds, agricultural implements, etc. "How long it may be before the end comes, we cannot tell," he wrote. "Our duty is to be ready: and to this end no time must be lost, for the coming spring may see the territory that is at present occupied by the enemy evacuated." [13] On January 25, Mr. Massingham wrote on German reserves and the strength of the Allies. He thought Mr. Belloc's estimates, recently published, likely to be correct. "If they are correct, it is obvious that the Allies can fairly contemplate an overthrow of the German power at a not too remote date. Victory is certain . . . and we ought to be able to envisage a reasonably early end to the German war of invasion." The German war of defence (*i.e.*, against our invading armies) opened up to him a different series of considerations: and here the pages of the *Daily News* were again enriched by another of his memorable pictures, viz.:

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burning which we had shelled, and yet there we were talking just like two footer teams. Everything is quiet to-day, neither side firing, but I suppose we shall be at one another's throats again to-morrow. Rot, isn't it?"

[13] Widespread welcome was accorded to this little kindergarten scheme for the restoration of Belgium. The *Daily News* printed letters as follows:

"When the time comes I shall be pleased to give at least five dozen fruit trees."

"I shall be only too glad to do my little in helping with supply of seed potatoes."

Another reply promised a pedigree Jersey bull and a pedigree Berkshire boar.

"There the moral factor comes sharply into view," he wrote, "and Justice, Firmness, Moderation, Liberty, appear as the majestic qualities which will define and guide the progress of our armies and the humane purposes to which statesmanship will direct them."[14]

[14] "The Triumph of Ententeism. Early Massingham allegorical now in Berlin Art Gallery."

5

THE BEGINNING OF THE BLOCKADE

OPTIMISM began to wane as the year drew to a close. For one thing, the Russian steam roller did not do all that was expected of it. At first, it was difficult for the Liberals to believe in its failure, and they were wont to describe the situation in Poland as "puzzling" or "vague."[1] The vagueness, however, rapidly lifted, and on December 9 the *Daily News* was forced to recognise that "it would be unwise to anticipate a swift decision successfully forced by Russia." . . . "Without anticipating the worst, it seems fairly certain that for the time being Marshal von Hindenburg has achieved his main object—the preservation of Silesia and Posen from invasion." There was no question of a Russian defeat, it continued; all that had happened was that the Germans had been too strong for the Russians. The Germans, of course, *would* be "smashed through," but for the present we had "to adjust our calculations to a more prolonged struggle." "The mud of Poland," which was sorely hindering the movements of the Russian army, soon became as useful a stunt as the "Russian steam roller."

The adjustment of calculations to a more prolonged struggle manifested itself in various ways. The Conservative demand for conscription had not yet become rampant, but there was enough scent of it in the air to make the Liberals uneasy. Their emphasis upon the omnipotence of the British Navy grew more and more pronounced. "The Triumph of the Navy" was the trump card of the Liberals throughout the war, displayed by them with immense flourish whenever

[1] See *Daily News* leader, Dec. 1, 1914, "The Mystery of Poland."

the military situation was inconclusive.[2] See how "all the time the most wonderful things in history" have been happening, cried A.G.G. exultantly at one of his first naval reviews. (*Daily News,* December 12, 1914.) The whole mercantile marine of Germany, he pointed out, had vanished from the seas. Her shipping industry was dead. "These invisible victories of the Fleet are the realities of warfare. You do take my life when you do take the means whereby

[2] Illustrations of the Liberals' constant habit when the military situation was unsatisfactory of falling back upon "the triumph of the British Navy."

Daily News, July 31, 1915, A.G.G., in reviewing a year of war, when the military situation was far from encouraging, the failure of the Dardanelles expedition being very apparent, the Russian steam roller being at a stop, diplomatic efforts to bring in Bulgaria, Greece and Rumania having so far been unsuccessful, wrote to dispel pessimism which the Conscriptionists were busy promoting, and pointed out that Germany had not scored success in a single theatre, "And behind the military failure of Germany there looms another fact which throws a still darker shadow on the picture . . . the pressure of sea power, though slow to make itself felt, has a deadly and cumulative certainty that is the more irresistible because its operations are so subtle and incalculable."

Daily News, Oct. 27, 1915. Serbia being in grave peril, the leading article cheered its readers by reminding them that the war would not be decided in the Balkans but in the main theatre of the struggle—"and in one theatre, that of the sea, we have a supremacy that is absolute."

Daily News, Nov. 3, 1915. Leading article on "Premier's Hopeful and Inspiring Message to Empire": "He did not slur over any aspects of failure but he kept our failures in just perspective and in true relation to the vastness of our achievements—the triumph of the Navy."

Daily News, Dec. 20, 1915. "The Blockade of Germany: The Foreign Office announced on Saturday the seizure on a Swedish steamer of about 8,000 lbs. of rubber. . ." This just showed how efficient we were. "Fortunately from the very early days of the war there has been no doubt at all about the completeness of the British Navy's command of the seas, and there is abundant evidence to show that the blockade of Germany has not only been established but has become effective. It is unfortunate that while it has been possible to use the relatively meaningless victories of the German armies as a gigantic advertisement for the Central Powers this far greater and far more really significant triumph has been of necessity a silent one."

Daily News, Jan. 1, 1916. "A New Year's Day Vista," by A.G.G. "Despite the vista being depressing, the Allies have had

I live. And it is the means whereby she lives that the British Navy is taking from Germany.'' It was this jealous pride in the naval weapon which carried the Liberals so wholeheartedly into the policy of the blockade. Their anxiety to parade and to make political capital out of the supremacy of the Fleet made them insensible to the legal and moral arguments with which America disputed the British policy of contraband, and heedless to the threat of the German submarine campaign.

By the end of 1914, it is true, as Mr. Churchill said, that the seas were free in the sense that every German ship had been driven off them.[3] German overseas commerce was ruined. The ''silent British Navy'' was casting its shadow over Germany. Though it had not yet abandoned all the restrictions imposed by the Declarations of London and Paris and by the Hague Conventions, it was nevertheless exercising enough pressure to satisfy the Liberal press that Germany was ''a nation under siege—a nation whose wells are running dry.''[4] The German Government was, moreover, so alive to

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the one indisputable victory the war has so far produced. It is the victory of the British Navy. . . . Every day the evidence accumulates of the impoverishment of the enemy in this way or that.''

Daily News, Mar. 19, 1916. A.G.G. on ''The Kaiser's Prison.'' The Kaiser, he said, had tried in vain to make a breach in the wall of his prison. There was one door he had not tried—the door of the North Sea. ''The real gaoler of Germany is not the armies that encompass her but the Navy. . . . The victory of the British Navy has been the supreme fact of the war. . . . We talk of the wonderful machine of the German army. . . . The machine of the British Navy has been more wonderful. It is so wonderful that it has won its victory almost without fighting—quite without serious challenge. . . . Let us remember this when our croakers tell us and tell the world that this country has not played its part. . . . We are charged with unpreparedness. But the sea was our sphere of action, and what measure of preparedness has been disclosed equal to that of the British Navy?''

[3] See Mr. Churchill's declaration, Feb. 3: ''For the first time in her history Great Britain can say 'The seas are free.' Even after Trafalgar we knew nothing like it.''

[4] The Conservative Press was less satisfied than the Liberal. From the outset it advocated the abandonment of all restrictions, and eventually succeeded in getting its policy accepted.

the situation and to the need for economy that it had assumed control of all the grain and flour in the country, and was fixing prices, a step which enabled the British Government to argue that they could no longer distinguish between the military and civilian population. For technically, it was maintained, the German Government's action made the whole of Germany an armed camp, and consequently put imports of foodstuffs, even when destined for civilians, into the contraband list. There is ample Press evidence to show that by the end of 1914 the British Government was acting upon this policy.[5] On New Year's Day, 1915, the *Daily News* wrote: "We have departed from our old practice of stopping cargoes of foodstuffs only when destined for the enemy forces, and are stopping them even when they might be used for the civil population." It referred to the technical justification above mentioned, and added that if the Government was quite sure that the British blockade would starve Germany into surrender, "and so shorten the war," then it had "a formidable strategical reason for persisting in the new policy towards foodstuffs."

The German submarine campaign was threatened on February 5, 1915, and there is no doubt that the threat would have been withdrawn had we consented to remove food supplies for civilians from the contraband list. The *Daily Mail* was quite accurate in its account of what took place when it said (February 25): "Almost from the day on which she proclaimed her bogus blockade, Germany has graciously allowed it to be known that she might be induced for a consideration not to enforce it. The consideration she had in mind was bluntly expressed both by Count Bernstorff, in Washington, and in the German Note to the U.S. Government of eight days ago. In that Note the Wilhelmstrasse declared in effect that the threatened submarine warfare on merchant shipping would be abandoned if the U.S. would 'make possible for Germany the legitimate importation of the necessaries of life and industrial raw material.' President Wilson has now acted

[5] The British Government's proclamation, putting foodstuffs and fodder on the list of conditional contraband, was issued on Oct. 29, 1914.

on Germany's appeal. He makes informal proposals to the British and German Governments. The gist of them apparently is that we should allow foodstuffs intended for the civilian population to enter Germany under some form of American guarantee and American distribution, and that the Germans in their turn should drop their submarine warfare and their policy of sowing the high seas with floating mines. The proposal is not likely to be acceptable to the British Government. Germany has menaced us with horrors and penalties she has no means of inflicting. Whatever our losses from submarines, they cannot represent more than an inappreciable fraction of our merchant marine. Germany, unable to enforce her threat, is, not unnaturally, willing to withdraw it on conditions. But it is not to our interest to listen to any conditions. We prefer that Germany should do her worst, knowing very well that her worst will be quite bearable. Apart, therefore, from the difficulty, the virtual impossibility of distinguishing between food for civilians and food for the army in a country where the Government has taken all foodstuffs under its control, our answer to the American suggestion should be a polite refusal."

Our answer to the American suggestion was a polite refusal, and a survey of the entire British Press at that time shows that the reasons advanced above by the *Daily Mail* were the ruling ones. It was not to our interest to listen to any conditions. Germany's offer to negotiate was looked upon as another "infamous proposal" which, considering our own power of establishing an effective blockade and so shortening the war, it was "impudent" of her to suggest. "The Allies are in command of all the seas in the world, except the Baltic, and yet Germany has the audacity to attempt to negotiate as an equal," said the *Morning Post* (February 10). "There will, of course, be no truck with the enemy." "Our policy is settled," said the *Daily News,* less aggressively, but with equal determination. And so the blockade and the retaliatory submarine campaign were launched.

As usual, however, it is impossible to get a clear account of the course of events from the Liberal Press. For precise

information it is always necessary to turn to Conservative newspapers, in this instance to the *Mail* or *Morning Post.*

As is seen, neither of these papers was at any pains whatever to conceal the fact that the British policy with regard to contraband "started" the submarine campaign.[6] But the Liberals, except for an occasional slip into precision, such as the admission on January 1 quoted above—("We have departed from our old practice of stopping cargoes of foodstuffs only when destined for the enemy forces, and are stopping them even when they might be used for the civil population")—avoided reference to our provocative action and carefully fostered the impression that it was we who were first assaulted and consequently obliged to resort to the blockade as a retaliatory measure. They proceeded as follows: They were first concerned to say "nonsense" to the German plea that our stopping of foodstuffs was causing starvation, though the Press had always made a great show of any symptoms of this in its columns and still continued to point out the "Triumph of the Navy." On January 30, A.G.G., in an article, "Berlin's Black Week," wrote: "We hold the purse of the world and, more important, the keys of the world. And it is because we have locked the door against her that that economic stress which will finally bring her overthrow is casting its shadow over her. . . . The nation (Germany) is put on rations, and no ingenious explanation can alter the import of that grim fact. Prices are soaring here, but it is not because the store house of the world is closed to us. It is because transport is insufficient. But the trouble with Germany goes deeper. It is a nation under siege, a nation whose wells are running dry." "Why this protest against the 'starvation' of Germany by our Navy?" asked Mr. Massingham, in the *Daily News* of February 8 ("The Scientific Blusterer"). "Clearly because she has discovered that the war may go on

[6] That the *Daily Mail* subsequently maintained that it was Germany who "began" it is merely an illustration of the fact that the *Mail* is always ready to maintain anything which people are willing to believe, and is completely indifferent at all times to the record of its files. "I contradict myself? Well, then, I contradict myself," is its jaunty attitude.

over the next harvest, and that her interim supplies are short. What is the remedy? That has not been thought out. All that occurs is to frighten many neutral ships from our ports so that we may share her embarrassments." On February 19, the leader on the German reply to America said: "It is a lie that England has driven her (Germany) to the submarine campaign by cutting off her food supplies and her supplies of raw material. . . . It is merely a pretext invented by Germany. That explains the loud protestations that the German people are in danger of starvation, protestations which there is no trustworthy evidence to support. If the danger of starvation were really urgent the German authorities would not trumpet it abroad." Opposite to this leader there was a headline right across the page, as follows: "GERMANY FACED WITH GRIM SPECTRE OF STARVATION: FOOD RIOTS IN BERLIN; MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS THRASHED BY INFURIATED WOMEN: TOWNS IN SOUTH GERMANY FACED WITH STARVATION." And on the following day, A. G. G., writing on "The Coming of Fear" in Germany, said: "That she will starve by the inexorable operation of the present forces alone seems hardly to admit of doubt. . . . No, we need not suppose that Germany is crying 'Wolf' without cause. The great Fear has come upon her. It is reflected in those letters found on German prisoners . . . it is permeating the Press: it emerges gauntly from the very facts of the situation." Mr. Gardiner evidently remembered something of the previous day's leading article, for he added: "I hear it is said that if the Fear were real the German General Staff would take care to hide knowledge so valuable to the enemy. There are some things too big to hide."

The inconsistencies of these various statements are certainly too big to hide. But the Liberals were so certain that Germany had no *right* to question the economic pressure which was being used against her that they denied that she had any *reason* for questioning it. The "Grim Spectre of Starvation" was in its proper place as an illustration of the triumph of the British Navy,[7] as an objection to that triumph

[7] *Daily News*, Jan. 27, 1916. "The Blockade." "Grave Words by Sir E. Grey." Leader rejoices that Grey had dragged an "impudent in-

it was regarded as mythical.[8] Morality and Reality were strangely confounded in their minds.

The same contradiction occurred in their justification of the blockade, which was announced publicly by Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons on February 15, 1915. "We shall bring," said Mr. Churchill, "the full force of naval pressure to bear on the enemy. It may be enough without war on land to secure victory over the foe." "The House cheered," reported P.W.W. of the *Daily News*. "The Minister was determined, unflinching, triumphant. For him, a descendant of Marlborough, it was undoubtedly a supreme, a historic mo-

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vention of the Northcliffe Press" into light, and shown it to be false. "The blockade has been marvellously effective." "We cannot forego the exercise of sea power. We have exercised it with humanity and with justice."

Daily News, May 11, 1916. "The Strangle Hold on Germany." "Striking Facts." "Increasing Effect of Our Blockade on Life and Industry." "Lengthy and comprehensive statement from neutrals re suffering and mortality among children."

Daily News, June 3, 1916. "The Blockade is Telling." "The Whole of Germany on Short Commons." "Food Prices Doubled."

Daily News, July 1, 1916. "Wood-meal in German War Bread." "Blockade Telling." "Germany, it is clear, is at present in the condition of an enormous besieged city rapidly nearing the end of its resources." "Germany under Blockade." "Sawdust in Bread: Greasy Water Purchased." "In Austria all signs point to economic collapse."

Daily News, Jan. 19, 1917. "Hunger in Germany: No Longer Possible to Conceal Facts." "Rations Sinking." See also A.G.G.'s article on Jan. 20 exultant at Shadow of Famine in Germany.

Daily News, Feb. 7, 1917. "Austria's Last Loaf."

Daily News, Feb. 13, 1917. "Tight Belt in Berlin." "People Sick and Giddy from Sense of Powerlessness." (On Feb. 17 Mr. Wells stated that his view of the war was of "nothing more than a gigantic and heroic effort in sanitary engineering.")

Daily News, Oct. 16, 1917. "Winter Outlook in Germany." "Disease Rampant and a Coal Famine."

[8] This contrariness of argument prevailed in the pages of the *Daily News* throughout the war. Sometimes, in order to demonstrate the strength of the British Navy and the certainty of British victory, it argued that Germany was being starved; at other times, to confute German argument against the British Blockade, it was concerned to maintain that the Blockade was perfectly harmless, and almost suggested that the Germans were fattening on it!

ment." "We have always relied for our safety on naval power," continued the descendant of Marlborough, "and in that respect it is not true to say that we entered this war unprepared. On the contrary, the German Army was not more ready for offensive war on a gigantic scale than was the British Fleet for national defence." (Cheers.) The admiring Parliamentary correspondent pursued his encomiums. "He told how the economic pressure was being felt. The 'hatred and anger' to which Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg confesses shows that—note the artistic anti-climax [9]—the restriction is inconvenient."

"The Triumph of the Navy" was, naturally, the title of the *Daily News* leading article on this historic occasion. "It is easy to forget the magnitude of that influence(*i.e.*, British sea-power)," it said, "because its greatest achievements are as silent as they are crushing. But in all history there has been nothing comparable with the ascendancy which the British Fleet has established on the high seas to-day. It makes Germany a nation under siege, living upon its own vitals, and apart from all military considerations, doomed by the mere flux of time. But even yet the Navy has not put forth the full measure of its power. . . . We may declare a blockade

[9] The sense of humour capable of noting such artistic anti-climaxes is again reflected in an article on the same date by James Douglas on "The Humour of Hassall," praising the typically British quality of Mr. Hassall's drawings. "In the days before the great war Max Beerbohm drew John Bull as a peevish, irascible old valetudinarian mumbling irritably at the world. But the great war has rejuvenated John Bull. I like to think of him now as a Hassall optimist, full of vitality and good humour, rejoicing in the colossal job of making this old Europe of ours (*sic*) fit for human beings to live in once more. It is an ugly job, and John Bull does not pretend that he likes it, but he is determined to do it without losing his big, broad, humane soul. And Hassall is the very man to help John Bull to carry on without yielding to any thin malevolence of impotent frenzy which would only weaken his arms and misdirect his blow. That sort of wastefulness it is well to leave to our friend the enemy. The more wildly he hits out the more broadly must John Bull grin, and Hassall's cartoons will help him to keep the precious sense of humour which makes for cool hitting and hard hitting, on the mark, on the point, but *never* below the belt."

of the German ports or we may extend the definition of contraband. Already there has been a hint [10] that the latter course may be pursued in relation to wheat. The justification for this policy would be the fact that the German Government have taken control of the wheat supply of the country,[11] and that therefore it is now a formal military element in the situation. The inclusion of wheat in the list of contraband—much as we may dislike it—is strictly within our rights."

Dislike of this action (*i.e.*, the listing of wheat as contraband) possibly influenced the Liberals to resort to the argument that the German submarine threat forced us to it. The technical plea by itself was insufficient to overcome their compunction. They availed themselves of it, as has been seen, before the submarine campaign was threatened, but even then they could not resist introducing the humanitarian consideration that "the new policy towards foodstuffs" might, conceivably, "shorten the war." As soon, however, as Germany made known her intention of retaliating, they proceeded to call their action retaliatory, and the invisibility of the pressure exerted by the silent British Navy, compared with the visi-

[10] A hint which had been acted upon for some time, according to *Daily News*, Jan. 1, 1915: "We have departed from our old policy of stopping cargoes of foodstuffs only when destined for the enemy forces, and are stopping them even when they might be used by the civil population." See also American Note of Protest published Jan. 1, paragraph dealing with the listing of food as conditional contraband, i.e., "in the case of conditional contraband, a number of American cargoes seized consist of foodstuffs. In spite of the presumption of innocent use because destined to neutral territory, the British authority made these seizures and detentions without being in possession of facts which warranted a reasonable belief that the shipments had in reality a belligerent destination as that term is used in international law."

[11] The technical difficulty constituted by this fact could have been overcome had there been any real "dislike" on the part of the Liberal Government of profiting by it. The German Federal Council, in announcing (Jan. 27) that the German Government would take over all stocks of food and flour, inserted in the Order a provision to the effect that the measure did not extend to corn and flour imported from abroad. "The clause is a fraud, and a malicious fraud," commented the *Times*, Feb. 5, and the technical argument was still maintained by the Liberal Press.

bility of the submarine outrages, enabled them to establish and maintain this fiction in the public mind. Account must also be taken of a conviction, so deep-seated as to appear unarguable to those who held it, concerning the inalienable right of the Navy to rule the seas and to exert pressure upon the enemy. The right was looked upon by all parties as a sacred duty: its moral sanction was considered beyond dispute. The conviction stands out clearly enough in the Conservative Press utterances[12]: it emerges indistinctly from the arguments of the Liberal Press, or rather, it has to be assumed, for on this assumption only can any sense be made out of those arguments. Only by acknowledging the supreme, unquestionable right of the British Navy to make Germany a nation under siege, "living upon its own vitals and, apart from all military considerations, doomed by the mere flux of time," could the German counter-measure of submarine warfare be regarded as an infamous provocation requiring, moreover, further "retaliatory" action on our part. The "retaliation" was real enough. On March 1, 1915, Mr. Asquith announced in the House of Commons that the Allies would prevent commodities of any kind from entering or leaving Germany. All articles, not merely such as were contraband or of service to the armed forces of the enemy, were to be seized by the Allied cruisers. Mr. Asquith's reference to the "so-called German blockade of our coasts" provoked hearty laughter, while a further outburst of cheering followed his announcement that *we* did not intend to put into operation any measures that were not likely to be effective. "We are not going to allow our efforts to be strangled in a network of juridical niceties." "I need not say," he added, "we shall carefully avoid any measures that violate the rules either of humanity or of honesty. We are quite prepared to submit to the arbitrament of neutral opinion, and still more to the verdict of impartial history, that in the circumstances in which we have

[12] e.g., "it is the chief weapon of our armoury that the Navy can be used to stop Germany's supplies, and if that weapon is put up in its sheath in deference to neutral sentiment we fight this war deprived of our rightful advantage." (*Morning Post,* Feb. 13, 1914.)

been placed we have been moderate, we have been restrained, we have abstained from things which we were provoked and tempted to do—and we have adopted a policy which commends itself to reason, to commonsense, and to justice." (Cheers.)

The policy indicated by Mr. Asquith did not, however, commend itself to neutral opinion, which ranged from mild remonstrance to angry criticism concerning his determination to ignore those "juridical niceties" which were the accepted principles of international law. The juridical network was an international agreement—the Declaration of Paris—to which England had set her hand and seal, but which she now proposed to violate. Our submission to the arbitrament of neutral opinion took the form of the suppression from publication of the Dutch Note of protest,[13] which could be read in the Dutch and German papers. The public were, however, permitted to see the American Note, which was published on April 6 in the English Press, by which time our policy, as the *Daily News* remarked, was "settled" and in full swing. For a month or more previously the American papers had been full of shocked and even angry comment upon "England's false step" and her embarkation with Germany upon "a policy of lawlessness." The course proposed by Mr. Asquith was declared by the neutrals to be without sanction in international law. By stopping all commerce with Germany, the Allies were as lawless as their enemies in announcing the submarine campaign. If the Allies chose to blockade German ports, well and good—so the Americans criticised—they could have done that from the beginning of the war without criti-

[13] The suppression of the Dutch Note made the Liberal Press uneasy. "There has undoubtedly been a tendency to enlarge the sphere of silence beyond due limits," wrote the *Daily News* on March 10. It instanced the suppression of the Dutch Note and of the fact that five Social Democratic members of the Russian Duma had been sent to Siberia.

"Perhaps they deserved to be sent to Siberia. But we ought to be told. It is time to speak quite plainly. This obscurantism has become something approaching a scandal. It is mischievous, futile and harmful." Moreover, said the *Daily News*, it interfered with the conviction that we were fighting for liberty.

cism, provided their blockade had been formally proclaimed "effective and continuous." "But the novel and quite unprecedented feature" of the new policy was that "it embraces many neutral ports and coasts, bars access to them, and subjects all neutrals seeking to approach them to the same suspicion that would attach to them were they bound for the ports of the enemies of Great Britain." [14] This was a "distinct invasion of the sovereign rights" of the neutrals. England, they declared, was now stooping to the level which Germany had reached in proclaiming at the time when she invaded Belgium that necessity knows no law. Mr. Asquith, they suggested, must be jealous of the laurels of Bethmann-Hollweg with his scrap of paper when he declared that England was not going to be prevented from working her will on her enemy by "juridical niceties." What was proposed was a leap into the dark backwards—a return to the times of Berlin decrees and Orders in Council.[15] From that reign of terror at sea it was supposed that the world had been securely delivered by the Declaration of Paris in 1856. That declaration was subscribed to by Great Britain, France, Prussia, Austria, Russia, and several other nations. The United States did not sign because the Declaration did not come up to the terms of the historic American contention that all private property at sea should be exempt from capture. But the declaration laid down specifically that "the neutral flag covers enemy's goods with the exception of contraband of war." It was in view of this and other agreements that Admiral Mahan wrote, in his "Influence of Sea-Power": "The principle that the flag covers the cargo is for ever secure." That principle was now openly flouted by the British Government. "The right of the belligerent ends where the right of the neutral begins" declared America and neutral opinion generally. The war, as conducted by British Liberals, brought other counsel.

The *Daily News* leader upon the American Note of Protest (April 6) was characteristic. "The object of the Amer-

[14] American Note.

[15] Mr. T. G. Bowles also condemned Mr. Asquith's policy on these grounds; see his letter to *Morning Post*, March, 1914.

ican Note," it said cheerfully, "is to put America's protest on record. Of retaliation, still less of force, there is no hint. Complications of a grave kind are therefore not at all likely to follow from the Government's policy." Which shows the exact amount of respect entertained by war-Liberals for the arbitrament of neutral opinion.

The impartial verdict of history may question the restraint and moderation claimed by Mr. Asquith when it considers the British attitude towards the American attempt to bring about an agreement between England and Germany regarding submarine warfare and the blockade. American Notes on these questions were sent in identical language to both belligerents during February, though the Note to this country and the British reply to it were not published here until much later (March 18). The Note suggested that Germany and England should agree

1. That isolated drifting mines should be laid by neither party;
2. That submarines should not be employed against merchant ships except for the purpose of carrying out the right of search;
3. That the use of neutral flags to avoid capture (authorised by the British Government) should be abandoned;
4. That Great Britain should agree that foodstuffs should not be placed on the list of absolute contraband, and that British authorities should not hold up cargoes of foodstuffs when addressed to agencies in Germany, the names of which were to be communicated by the United States for the purpose of receiving such goods and handing them over to licensed German retainers for further distribution exclusively to the civil population.

The German reply to this Note was, on March 1, reported in the American papers to be "most friendly"; it accepted the substance of the American proposals with a reservation on the employment of mines, and asked that, in addition to

food, "raw materials for peaceful economic purposes, including fodder," should be allowed. The British reply was a flat refusal, and no protest against this uncompromising attitude was entered by the British Liberal Press. Instead, they were occupied in advertising the "utter failure" of the German submarine blockade, the headlines being "Pirates' Bad Week," "Gloom Deepens in Germany," "Fiasco," and "Pitiful Failure." The *Daily News* special correspondent, W. M. Duckworth, wrote on March 8 from Copenhagen, always a great source of information, "The utter failure of the German submarine warfare is now established. The failure of the whole blockade is realised by the Berlin public. A photograph of the Kaiser taken a few days ago reveals a highly distressed countenance."

A survey of the Liberal Press at this time reveals a most cheerful mood. Prospects seemed bright. Sir J. French had expressed his confidence of definite victory. Przemysl had fallen, and the Russians were moving "irresistibly" into Hungary. War fervour was rising in Italy, whose entry into the war was expected at any moment. Great expectations were centred on the Dardanelles expedition, just begun. There was no trouble at home except the drink question, which was affecting munitions and causing unrest on the Clyde. But the King was setting an example to the nation, and Lord Kitchener had followed his lead. Easter passed brightly. According to Harold Ashton,[16] of the *Daily News,* our troops at the front had a very jolly time.[17] "The solemn feast of Eastertide,"

[16] This correspondent was always alive to the lighter side of war. His columns of news were never dull, frequently amusing. He was evidently a favourite at G.H.Q. On April 13 he wrote: "G.H.Q. is absolutely a jolly place—no flap, no side, no heel clicks. Field-Marshal French was a human man—genial, friendly, with a handshake that strikes a glow into you." (i.e., the sort that people who are not jolly try to avoid.) "Naturally his 'boys,' as the Staff are familiarly known, love him, and would waltz through Hades gladly enough for him. . . . I was billeted with them one night, and it was the most glorious night's fun I have ever had . . . a night of monkey tricks, and all sorts of harmless, healthy nonsense."

[17] *Daily News* headlines: "HOW OUR TROOPS SPENT EASTER"; "HOT CROSS BUNS IN THE TRENCHES"; "RUGBY FOOTBALL UNDER SHELL FIRE."

he wrote, "has been celebrated with unexplosive decorum with a bishop in khaki as chief celebrant and a busy flock of padres ministering to spiritual needs. Our Bishop looks well in his fighting rig." Peace talk,[18] which was being mooted by the Germans, was by all parties voted absurd. The blockade had only just begun.

[18] April 10, *Daily News*: "MORE GERMAN PEACE TALK"; "REPORTED PROPOSALS TO U.S. GOVERNMENT"; "WILLING TO EVACUATE BELGIUM." Chicago correspondent says. "*Chicago Tribune* publishes a dispatch from Washington stating that Germany has within the past 48 hours informally communicated to the United States Government that she is prepared to discuss peace terms. The terms she is willing to discuss include the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum* in Europe; the redistribution of the colonies of the belligerents captured in the war, particularly those in Africa. Germany, while willing to evacuate Belgium, refuses to pay any indemnity, but would purchase the Belgian Congo. She also proposes that all nations should enter an agreement establishing the freedom of the seas and the immunity of all commerce from attack in war-time. No one here believes that the Allies would consider for a moment such proposals, particularly the agreement to deprive Great Britain of the power of the sea."

7

THE MOBILISATION OF NEUTRALS

As the talk about conscription grew louder, the Liberals became increasingly interested in the mobilisation of other belligerents. The Conservatives were more concerned to conscript at home than abroad. But the Liberals' dislike of compulsion did not extend to unwillingness to see it operating in other countries. Neither did their aforetime interest in neutrality and in the attempt to localise the conflict incline them to discourage interventionist movements in Italy, Rumania and Greece. On the contrary, the Liberal Press was most active in advertising war fervour in these countries and in pointing out the moral and material advantages which would accrue upon their entrance into the war.

Italy, of course, was from the outset regarded as being most likely to render first aid to the Allies, but in January, 1915, Italy not having yet "come in," public attention was suddenly diverted to Rumania. A Rumanian mission visited Paris, and at a dinner given in their honour by the Entente, the Rumanian envoy drank to the victory of the Allies. The *Daily News* special correspondent in Rome, Mr. R. Mackenzie, wrote (January 11): "I am informed that the Rumanian mobilisation is imminent. The army is ready to take the field and to occupy Transylvania. Rumania's intervention was expected to follow Italy's, but probably it will anticipate it owing to the Russian invasion of Hungary." On January 13 the *Daily News* special correspondent in Paris wrote of an interview he had had with M. Diamandy, the Rumanian Minister: "The impressive straightforwardness with which Rumania pursues her national aims in the eyes of the whole world is strikingly illustrated in the interview. . . . As he

shook my hand at parting, M. Diamandy added: 'Let me express my pleasure at the kindly interest shown by the *Daily News* towards my country.' '' On the 28th the headlines of this newspaper were: ''Loan to Rumania: Bank of England agrees to advance £5,000,000.'' [1]

On February 2, 1915, the *Daily News* had a leader, ''The Balkans and the War,'' as follows:

''With the approach of spring the question of the neutral Powers in regard to the war becomes of increasing importance. Recent declarations and events have pointed very definitely to the intention of Rumania throwing its weight into the scale on the side of the Allies, and the movements of the enemy on the Rumanian frontier are evidently designed to meet that contingency. But Rumania, like Italy, with which it moves in close sympathy, is a cautious country when war is afoot, and though the interest it has at stake in Transylvania is a large one, its entry into the arena is still only problematical. There is no doubt about the reality of its sympathy with the Allied cause, and as far as direct interest in the issues of the war is concerned, none of the neutrals is more deeply involved. The fact that that interest can only be served by an active share in the cost of securing a settlement on true nationalist lines should be final.''

''Greece, too, will see where her true interest lies speedily,'' said the leader, and if only Servia would return that part of Macedonia which was Bulgarian to Bulgaria, it declared that we should have Bulgaria on our side too. It proceeded to suggest an arrangement which, ''provided Bulgaria gave her support to the Allies,'' might be reached with her, Servia being willing. ''The Servian kingdom should be extended so as to include Bosnia, Herzegovina and the Dalmatian coast,'' and in return for that extension Servia should give Bulgaria what she wanted in Macedonia. (This arrangement was, however, frustrated.)

Meanwhile, despite frequent notices from ardent special

[1] On Feb. 11, 1915, the German loan of £3,000,000 to Bulgaria was advertised by *Daily News* as ''German *Bribe* to Bulgaria.''

correspondents reporting violent enthusiasm for war,[2] both Italy and Rumania tarried and the Dardanelles Expedition was launched. If the Allies could establish themselves at Constantinople and in the Black Sea it was reckoned that Greece and Rumania, and even Bulgaria, would at once throw in their lot with the Allies,[3] and their forces would thus be available to bar the way to an enemy drive towards the East. Turkey would collapse, the Mesopotamian and Egyptian campaigns would in consequence be concluded, and finally the opening of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus would ease the situation in Russia by permitting the export of Russian corn and the import of Allied munitions.[4]

With these manifold ends in view, A.G.G., of the *Daily News,* became lyrical on March 13 concerning the ill-fated expedition. "There by the Golden Horn," he sang, "sits the stolen bride of the Western World and of Christendom . . . and now at last the hour of deliverance has struck. The thunder of the guns in the Dardanelles brings a message as refreshing and full of hope as the pipes of the Highlanders brought to the straining ears of Lucknow." As late as July this optimism continued. On May 7, under the headline, "Brilliant Advance at Dardanelles," the *Daily News* leader wrote: "The statement of the Prime Minister yesterday on the subject of the operations in the Gallipoli peninsula will give profound satisfaction. . . . It is clear that the Navy has done all that is at present possible in the way of clearing the Narrows, and that its further operations must follow upon a very decisive success on shore. So far the land operations

[2] See *Daily News,* Feb. 9: "Italian Call for War: Public Propaganda Initiated: Unanimity: Meetings and Leagues to Force Government." by R. Mackenzie; Feb. 10, "Rumania on the Brink: Fervent Popular Demand for War of Liberation: Waiting for the Word to March," by G. M. Trevelyan.

[3] See *Daily News,* March 5, 1915, "It (the Expedition) furnishes to the hesitating neutrals of South-East Europe a weighty concrete argument for passing from hesitation to decision"; see also *Daily News,* March 8; Leader very confident that the expedition will bring Greece in; "a trumpet call to the Greeks."

[4] A study of the second report of the Dardanelles Commission reveals all these motives very clearly.

seem to have been entirely satisfactory. . . . Mr. Asquith did not indicate what progress had been made in dealing with these (Turkish) defensive positions, but the fact that the Army is now firmly established on shore justifies the expectation that the clearing of the Narrows, and with it the removal of the main obstacle to the advance of the Fleet to Constantinople, is now well in sight.[5] . . . There has been much criticism [6] of the enterprise on the ground that the risks involved are too great to add to the burden of the Allies. But all war involves risk, and it is reasonable to assume that the Government and their military and naval advisers have thoroughly surveyed the ground and have come to the conclusion that the task to which they have set their hands is manageable. If the attack succeeds, as we have every reason to believe it will succeed, the moral and material gains will constitute by far the most important achievement of the war."

The impressive straightforwardness with which Italy pursued her national ambitions is well reported in the *Daily News*. Mr. R. Mackenzie, the *Daily News* special correspondent in Rome, never attempted to conceal her business-like motives or to hide the fact that she was bent upon making the best bargain she could. There was nothing whatever in his reports to warrant the idealism with which the editorial columns struggled to drape her attitude. On March 30 an interview with the editor of the Milan *Secolo* was printed, in which that "noted" individual said: "I must confess that the great majority of the Italians do not appreciate the ideal reasons of the war. But we are all for France and England." This frank admission did not prevent the leading article next day from commenting: "The demand for intervention proceeds from a deeper and better motive even than the desire to regain unredeemed Italy. It proceeds from the instinct of liberty which is the splendid tradition of the Italian people."

[5] For some of the facts, readers may refer to the diary of events given by a soldier M.P., who took part in the expedition, "Mons, Anzac and Kut" (Methuen, 1919).

[6] For criticism of the enterprise, see *Daily Mail* of this period.

That Italy was not without other instincts was, however, shown by the headline of April 10: "Italy's hesitation: No wish for war if she can obtain what she wants without." On April 20 Mr. R. Mackenzie wrote: "I am diplomatically informed that negotiations with the Allies have now reached a decisive phase regarding the settlement of the question of the Adriatic coast, which is intimately connected with Italy's future invasion of Austria. I am not allowed to be more explicit, but the importance of the settlement of this question, from the Italian standpoint, is so obvious that the Allies will doubtless accept the solution proposed by the Italian Government which England and France already support." Apparently, Servia's objections to the Italian solution of the Adriatic problem had still to be overcome. The Secret Treaty, it is now known, was signed on April 26. "Intervention will be practically announced on Wednesday," said Mr. Mackenzie on May 4.

"The Last Bid for Italy: Austria offers any Compensation" was announced next day. "It is an open secret," said Mr. R. Mackenzie, "that Prince Bulow and Baron Macchio are now playing their last card, offering unconditionally any compensation with the object of averting Italy's intervention." A week later, May 4, events were still declared to be "Hurrying to their climax," but the climax turned out to be the resignation of the Italian Cabinet. Despite an outburst of public feeling led by d'Annunzio, it was evident that for the moment the policy of intervention had been defeated. The *Daily News* mourned as follows: "German diplomacy has scored its third great victory and Allied diplomacy has suffered its third great disaster. The first was the entrance of Turkey into the war . . . the second was the failure to bring in Greece and through Greece to mobilise the Balkans . . . now there is the failure to range Italy on the side of the Allies." "What have our diplomats been up to?" it asked angrily. They had under-rated the strength of the non-interventionist Signor Giolitti, "who has all along made no concealment of his belief that war would be a terrible misfortune for Italy, and that by negotiations considerable conces-

sions could be obtained from Austria without drawing the sword." Austria, if report was to be believed, it continued, had offered enormous concessions, "the Trentino as far as Meran, some Dalmatian islands, and autonomous Trieste, a better Eastern frontier and a free hand in Albania." The Allies should, it urged, have gone one better than Austria, should have revealed themselves "as supremely careful of Italian sensibilities and ready to meet Italian demands." Yet it had not done so. Allied diplomacy had actually allowed their Press to criticise and irritate Italian opinion—the *Manchester Guardian,* for instance, had printed "a long letter from Sir Arthur Evans, who himself took part in the negotiations, which was in effect an indictment of Italian policy." These things, said the *Daily News,* were not helpful. Silence would have been best. "Italy's demands were not easy to satisfy and, if we are to accept the description of them given by Sir A. Evans, they could not be justified on the principle of nationality, which they violated gravely." The *Daily News* declared that the diplomacy of the Allies had to make up its mind whether it needed Italian co-operation and what it was worth. If the Allies thought the principle of nationality more precious than Italian co-operation . . . well, there was no mistaking the *Daily News'* opinion of such a pedantic attitude.

The disappointment did not last. The fall of the Liberal Government and the formation of the first Coalition, announced by Mr. Asquith on May 20, may have had something to do with the course of Italian events.

On May 21 the headlines of the *Daily News* declared: "Italy to make good her rights by force of arms: Italian Cabinet decides for war." The leading article announced that the Italian Parliament had at last "registered the will of the people of Italy. That will has been firm on the side of the Allies for reasons neither obscure nor ignoble . . . in reality this rather inglorious and petty haggling about the status of Trieste or the form which Italy's interests in Dalmatia are to take are much more the occasion than the cause of Italy's entry into the war." Italy was fighting, it said, mainly for

civilisation. "Only great causes move to the great passions such as those which have swept Italy on to war."

"Nobody will deny," said the *Daily News* on the following day, when the Italian declaration of war upon Austria-Hungary had been formally declared, "that the concessions offered by Austria were substantial." But, then, who could trust the promises of the Central Powers? "Germany gave the guarantees of her plighted word, but here the breach of faith in Belgium was avenged . . . so part of the price which Germany is paying for the crime against Belgium is to find Italy added to her foes. . . . Even through the tortuous maze of diplomacy and across the horror of war there gleams a fitful beam of justice." The *Daily News* hastened to say that it was, however, "no mere calculation of expediency which has called the Italian Government, still less the Italian people, into the struggle." They, of course, knew that the future of European civilisation was at stake. It might be, concluded the article, that the intervention of Italy would prove the beginning of a powerful movement. The next thing to do, it declared, was to get hold of Bulgaria. "We must mobilise Bulgaria," said the *Daily News* (May 28). "The alliance of Bulgaria is of great value to the Allies; it is worth the price asked and it can be obtained only by paying the price. Who wills the end must also will the means."

The state of affairs at this time and onwards was precarious for the Liberals. A Cabinet crisis had arisen in May, and as a concession to Tory onslaughts upon the Liberals' conduct of the war, a Coalition Government had been formed. But Lord Northcliffe was still unsatisfied. His Press was in full cry for conscription, and the pages of the *Times* and *Daily Mail* were devoted to advertising the approach of compulsion and to exposure of the Government's general incompetence. "NOT CHLOROFORMED: ONE MILLION ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR THOUSAND[7] PEOPLE WHO **know** DAILY" was the notice published in each day's issue of the *Daily Mail*. What they knew was the Dardanelles failure, which the

[7] The figures of the *Daily Mail's* circulation.

Liberals had not yet brought themselves to face,[8] and the fact, equally ominous to the *Daily Mail*, that the Government had not yet declared cotton to be contraband. This last announcement was inset daily in the middle of a page of the *Mail*, and the headlines of this time illustrate that journal's pertinacity.[9] "The paper that gets things done" was also con-

[8] See *Daily News*, June 7, Mr. Churchill at Dundee: "The army of Sir Ian Hamilton and the Fleet of Admiral de Robeck are separated only by a few miles from a victory such as this war has not yet seen. Through the Narrows of the Dardanelles and across the ridges of the Gallipoli peninsula lie some of the shortest paths to a triumphant peace," and compare with *Daily Mail* criticism of Mr. Churchill's statement: "It is the fact that 'only a few miles' stand between us and victory. But these few miles!!!" and, further, July 7: "All the world knows how that expedition has been bungled . . . that despite unprecedented bravery, we have hardly advanced at all through the hills and ravines that lead up the bottle-neck of Gallipoli. The politicians who started that expedition are still in their places; there has been a little reshuffling and a few men have been called into the Cabinet to bear the burden that will be too heavy for Mr. Asquith when the public realises what has happened." *Daily News*, July 1, 1915: "Victory in the Dardanelles—brilliant advance of 1,000 yards"; July 14: "The news from the Dardanelles is increasingly hopeful."

[9] July 23, 1915.—"The paper that gets things done" protests against Six Weeks' Holidays for M.P.'s. Will GERMANY GET COTTON DURING M.P.'s HOLIDAYS? COTTON AND CASUALTIES: "Every bale of cotton which reaches Germany means either an Allied cripple or a corpse."

July 27.—A THOROUGHLY BAD EXAMPLE: SIX WEEKS FOR MINISTERS TO GO TO SLEEP AGAIN.

July 28.—COTTON!

Aug. 11.—THE COTTON TRAGEDY: WILL OUR POLITICIANS NEVER ACT?

Aug. 12.—COTTON AND DEATH: QUEEN'S HALL MEETING: VIGOROUS SPEECH BY LORD C. BERESFORD.

Aug. 21.—WASTED LIVES: VICTIMS OF THE COTTON CRIME: "The Foreign Office has at last confessed to the Cotton Crime. After denying that cotton was going to Germany in any quantity, after shuffling on the subject for months, after attacking the Press, and particularly the *Daily Mail*, it has, 13 months too late, declared Cotton Contraband."

Aug. 28.—HUSH! DON'T MENTION COMPULSION! "Certain worthy folk have followed Mr. Cadbury (the *Daily News*) in urging the *Daily Mail* and other papers to hush up the question of Compulsion

ducting a fierce anti-Haldane campaign and drawing morals, as it alone knew how to draw them, from the news of the Russian reverses.[10]

The "Do-Nothing" Party, as the *Daily Mail* called the Liberals, were, however, far from idle in these critical days. They were busy advertising the Triumph of the Navy, the success of the War Loan and of Mr. Lloyd George's appeal for shell makers,[11] making the Russian defeats palatable,[12]

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and wait until the Government take action. . . . The DO NOTHING PARTY are the same people who told the *Daily Mail* to trust the Government about cotton. The *Daily Mail* did not trust the Government about cotton, and continued its pressure until cotton was made contraband. Readers of the *Daily Mail* do not trust the Government about Compulsion, and this journal will continue the work it embarked upon years ago in the hope that it may be able to secure the placing of Compulsion upon the Statute Book before it is too late."

[10] July 21.—The GREAT RUSSIAN RETREAT: WHAT WARSAW MEANS TO YOU.

July 31.—The AGONY OF WARSAW: ITS LESSON FOR US.

[11] e.g., *Daily News,* June 25, 1915.—Skilled workers' enthusiasm: Hundreds crowding to New Munitions Bureaux. "Already there are indications that extraordinary success will attend the national appeal for shell-makers so eloquently expressed by Mr. Lloyd George. Everywhere skilled workers are crowding to the munitions bureaux. . . . Universities are rallying to the appeal. Munitions classes are to be held at Liverpool University every day." Photographs on this date were given of "the Rev. P. McKenzie, Rector of S. James's Scottish Church, Goose Green, Dulwich," at work on a lathe, who "has answered Mr. Lloyd George's appeal by converting his vestry into a shell factory"; also of "Lady parishioners making periscopes in the Dulwich vestry."

[12] On June 5, after fall of Premzysl, A.G.G. wrote: "We need not be alarmed at these blows. The flame burns highest at the last. If we keep our minds on the essential facts that Germany and Austria are besieged and that every day that passes makes the siege more vigorous, we shall be able to see events like the fall of Premzysl in their true perspective." On June 24 the *Daily News* headlines were "Lemberg taken by storm: Austrians enter city after sustaining enormous losses," and the leading article said: "The Russian armies have doubtless been withdrawn from Lemburg as successfully as they were from Premzysl. Nothing is left to the conquerors but the shell." See also *Daily News,* Aug. 6. "Warsaw has fallen and Poland is destroyed. Germany has won a great military victory. But she has won the relentless enmity of the Russian people. . . . Russia which should be crushed is proclaiming

stimulating expectation of American intervention,[13] and addressing plain words to the Balkans.

On June 28, the "anniversary of the crime which caused the war," bargaining for Bulgaria was still going on. The *Daily News* reported: "The situation in Bulgaria has for some time past been obscure. The Entente Powers recently made certain proposals to Bulgaria involving territorial concessions on the part of the other Balkan States in return for Bulgaria's help in the Dardanelles. . . . On her part, Germany has approached the Bulgarian Government with pro-

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with the unanimous voice of her Duma her resolution to continue the struggle at all costs. . . . And into the heart of Englishmen, habitually slow to anger, the iron of German arrogance and German cruelty is entering day by day. . . . There is not one amongst us now who is not resolved that at any sacrifice and at any personal loss she shall not for these things be brought to judgment." Upon the fall of Kovno, Aug. 19: "Nevertheless, in the very long run, Germany will probably be found to have paid for her spectacular victories in the East a price that she can by no means afford." When the Russians surrendered Brest-Litovsk the *Daily News* remarked: "The fall of the most powerful of the Russian fortresses following so swiftly upon the capture of Warsaw, Novo Georgievsk and Kovno is an event which throws into dramatic relief the mighty change which has taken place in the fortunes of Russia. . . . In this moment of anxiety it is the spirit of Russia which is the vital matter. That spirit is unbroken."

[13] Mr. Henry James' assumption of British nationality was also welcomed as symbolical: "The news that Mr. H. James has resolved to 'throw his moral weight and personal allegiance" into the scale of England's 'present and future fortune' is an extraordinarily significant and encouraging sign of the times." Mr. Henry James's previous deliverance to a *Daily News* reporter is worth recording: Personally I feel so strongly on everything that the war has brought into question for the Anglo-Saxon peoples that humorous detachment or any other thinness or tepidity of mind on the subject affects me as vulgar impiety, not to say as rank blasphemy; our whole race question became for me a sublimely conscious thing from the moment Germany flung at us all her explanation of her pounce upon Belgium for massacre and ravage in the form of the most insolent 'Because I choose to damn you all' recorded in history. The pretension to smashing world rule by a single people in virtue of a monopoly of every title, every gift and every right ought perhaps to confound us more by its grotesqueness than to alarm us by its energy; but never do cherished possessions, whether of the hand or of the spirit, become so dear to us as when overshadowed by vociferous aggression. How can one help seeing that

posals on behalf of Turkey, and it remains to be seen whether the decision now apparently favoured by her rulers refers to the proposals of the Allies or to those of the Germanic Empires." On July 20 the Press headlines were "Bulgaria makes a plain offer: Macedonia in return for aid to Allies." The Bulgarian Prime Minister was reported to have said, "Bulgaria must know exactly what she is going to get out of it." On September 3, the leading article, "A Plain Word to the Balkans," remarked, "The question which each of the Balkan States is considering is on which side its bread is buttered." They ought to see, it added, that it was plainly buttered on the Entente side, and it was deplorable that they should so delay in seeing it. The situation became "obscure" again, and was referred to on September 11 as "The Balkan Riddle." Turkey's cession of territory to Bulgaria was reported on September 18, and on September 23 Bulgaria's order for a general mobilisation was published. "Bulgaria has been the centre of a ceaseless German intrigue in the Balkans ever since the war broke out," said the *Daily News*. It was evident from this that the "ceaseless" Entente negotiations had been unsuccessful. By October 2 the Balkan situation had become one of "utmost gravity"; "Austro-German" officers were reported to be directing the Bulgarian army.

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such aggression, if hideously successful in Europe, would, with as little loss of time as possible, proceed to apply itself to the American side of the world, and how can one, therefore, not feel that the Allies are fighting to the death for the soul and the purpose and the future that are in us, for the defence of every ideal that has most guided our growth and that most assures our unity? Of course, since you ask me, my many years of exhibited attachment to the conditions of French and of English life, with whatever fond play of reflection and reaction that may have been involved in it, makes it inevitable that these countries should particularly appeal to me at the hour of their peril, their need and their heroism, and I am glad to declare that though I had supposed I knew what that attachment was, I find I have any number of things more to learn about it. English life, wound up to the heroic pitch, is at present most immediately before me, and I can scarcely tell you what a privilege I feel it to share the inspiration and see further revealed the character of this decent and dauntless people."

On the 4th, Russia sent an ultimatum to Bulgaria and Allied troops prepared to land at Salonika (Greek territory). The situation continued to be "obscure and baffling" (*Daily News*) until October 7, when Bulgaria rejected Russia's ultimatum and joined the Austro-German forces in an attack upon Servia. "Servia at Bay" was the title of the *Daily News* leader on October 13. "Russia is to strike to-morrow, that is a fact which is still of the first importance, as everyone who has at all followed the confused history of the struggle for Bulgaria's *soul*[14] cannot fail to be aware."

Bulgaria having gone to the devil, the salvation of Greece became more than ever imperative. Cyprus was immediately offered to Greece to induce her to "come in." That offer was rejected (see Sir E. Grey's statement in the House of Commons, October 27) and, despite the activities of M. Venizelos on behalf of the Allies, the Greek Government continued to protest against the landing of Allied troops on Greek soil. The Allies were obliged to resort to a blockade, "a form of pacific pressure to which Greece is peculiarly susceptible," remarked the *Daily News* (November 22). "It is a great advantage that there are practically no neutral[15] issues to be considered." For several days there was no further information, which enabled the *Daily News* to make its customary references to the enigmatic condition of affairs.[16] "The mystery deepens," it declared on November 24. "The most favourable interpretation would be that the Greek Government has in the interval given the guarantee which the Allies demand. That is not unthinkable. The Legation's announcement (*i.e.*, of the blockade to be instituted) caused something like a panic among the merchants of Greece, and led apparently to some alarmed remonstrances from the Government itself." The "apparent" objections of the Greek Government were being reported by newspaper correspondents from all sides. Mr. R. Mackenzie, of Rome, wrote on

[14] The italics are mine. I.C.W.

[15] Except, of course, the interests of neutral Greece.

[16] Hesitation to "come in" on the side of the Allies was always, to the *Daily News*, tantamount to a "riddle."

December 2: "I have reason to believe that Greece has notified the Allies that their demands that Greece should evacuate Salonika and leave the Allies to assume the surveillance of Greek coasts are unacceptable, since this course, it is maintained, would practically amount to a violation of Greek neutrality." The "Mystery of Athens" went on through December. On January 13, 1916, the enemy commenced an attack upon the Allies at Salonika, and the Allies accordingly landed at Corfu. The Note to Greece on this occasion explained the landing as "necessary for the saving of the Serbian army, and so must not be considered an occupation." The Athens correspondent of the *Daily News* said: "The protest by the Greek Government is expected to be more energetic than it was on previous occasions," and wrote again on January 15: "The occupation (of Corfu) is wholly unjustifiable, and the Greek authorities do not know for what purpose it has been effected. The Note of the Allied Ministers speaks of humanity, of the transportation of the Serbian army for reasons of health, and so on. But the fact is that Greece is confronted with a French military occupation in violation of all international treaties guaranteeing the neutrality of Corfu just as they did that of Belgium. The humanitarian reasons given do not justify the violation of neutral territory. It is one thing to transport the Serbs to Corfu if it is necessary for reasons of health and recuperation; it is quite another to occupy the island in the manner effected by the Allies. The Greek Government had not given its consent to the landing and it did not know that it had taken place."

On January 21 the New York correspondent of the Associated Press wrote: "Just look at the list of Greek territories already occupied by the Allies—Lemnos, Imbros, Macedonia, Corfu, Salonika, including the Chalkis peninsula." The *Daily News* leader said: "It is evident that the business-like measures the Allies are taking for their protection on land and sea have inspired the King (of Greece) with lively resentment. That is not altogether astonishing. The conditions under which the Allies are encamped, and will soon be fighting, on neutral soil are an anomaly without

parallel in modern warfare, and they involve inevitably an attitude equally anomalous towards the neutrality of Greece. Apart from the occupation of the Salonika zone, her railways have been cut, her bridges blown up, certain of her islands borrowed, and Consuls accredited to her put under arrest. Such facts cannot and need not be disguised. They call for no defence from the Allies, for Greece has no one to thank for them but herself."

Allied landings at Greek ports and islands went on, the Greek Government still protesting. On April 17, "Allies' bold action in Balkans: Serbian army to be transported through Greek territory," was reported. The step, of course, was decided upon without the consent of Athens. "Strong protests have been made," said the *Daily News,* "but it is unlikely that Greek opposition will be carried any further."[17] On June 9, the situation was given in the following headlines—"Allied Pressure on Greece: Ports Blockaded by Fleets of the Entente: Bitter Protest"; on June 23, in "King Constantine Concedes Allies' Demands: Greece Yields." King Constantine, however, gave a great deal more trouble before he finally disappeared a year later (June 14, 1917). His recalcitrant behaviour and responsibility for "unprovoked" attacks upon the Allies, generally chronicled as "Dark deeds in Athens," were reported from time to time. That the Allies had the legal right to dictate to Tino, said the *Daily News,* was undeniable. Great Britain, France, and Russia had "freed" Greece at the battle of Navarino, drafted its constitution, and become its guarantors. They were therefore "warranted in taking any measures for the protection of their ward."

Rumania "came in" in August, 1916. Her entry was the occasion for wild acclamation from the entire Press. "It is the greatest 'bull-point' for the Allies that has ever occurred," said the *Daily News.* "It means the addition of more than half a million men to the Allied resources, a route into the heart of Hungary, involving a large extension of enemy line. . . . But it is not, of course, the military mean-

[17] cf. *Daily News* comment upon American protest against blockade.

ing which gives it importance—it means that in the judgment of the most astute and interested of neutral Powers, Germany's doom is sealed. Rumania has shortened the end." There is little doubt that Rumania's entry, coinciding as it did with the British successes on the Somme, was a powerful factor in determining the knock-out blow policy announced by Mr. Lloyd George on September 29. "Britain will tolerate no intervention now," said the Minister of Munitions, in an interview with Mr. Roy Howard, United Press of America. "The fight must be to a finish—to a knock-out." His words were obviously addressed as much to America as to Germany. Ever since the American note to Great Britain of November 8, 1915, protesting against the blockade, President Wilson had been seeking to mediate between the belligerents.[18]

[18] Count Bernstorff's evidence before the German Commission of Enquiry into Responsibility in and for the War throws light on these matters. Count Bernstorff, who was German Ambassador at Washington, stated: "Wilson first mentioned peace to me after the Lusitania affair; the danger of war with Germany was extremely threatening. If we would agree to give up the submarine war he for his part would urge on England the giving up of the starving of Germany . . . he hoped that this would be the beginning of peace action on a large scale. This was on June 2, 1915.

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"In Jan., 1916, House paid his second visit to Berlin. On his return he told me that the chief opposition to peace was at present in Paris; in England he had found a certain willingness. In Berlin, too, he had been told: 'We would be ready to respond to an American peace mediation at a suitable opportunity.' . . . I thereupon inquired from Berlin whether this was correct, and was answered to the effect that a certain amount of time must be allowed to lapse on account of the state of public opinion in Germany, but, generally speaking, it was desired to accept Wilson's mediation; however, a condition would be that Wilson should first call England to book. . . . House told me Wilson no longer had the power to oblige England to obey the practices of international law; American trade was so intimately tied up with the Entente that Wilson could not possibly disturb these trade relations without evoking a terrific storm. . . . He proposed a pause, and hoped without fail to be able to make a beginning of peace mediation towards the end of the summer. Then Rumania entered the war. . . . Colonel House told me that any mediation by Wilson was now impossible and must be deferred because, in consequence of Rumania's entry into the war, the Entente was now quite sure of victory

The Liberal Press in this country gave no publicity whatever to these efforts, being only concerned to draw attention to the threatening nature of the American negotiations with Germany arising out of the torpedoing of the Lusitania. The President of the United States, however, considered the British blockade to be almost as indefensible as the submarine campaign, and the missions of Colonel House to Europe in 1915 and 1916 were as much directed to get concessions from one belligerent as from the other.[19] The entry of Rumania frustrated all Mr. Wilson's hopes of mediation, which was not initiated again until the end of 1916, when the Allies' hopes of victory had been disappointed by the failure of the small nations to achieve what was expected of them.

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and would, therefore, refuse Wilson. I can only repeat that Colonel House told me Wilson's peace mediation must be deferred because the Entente was sure of its victory now that Rumania had come into the war.''

[19] For an illuminating survey of the causes of the entry of the United States into the war see Prof. H. E. Barnes' ''Genesis of the World War'' (A. A. Knopf), Chapter IX.

8

CONSCRIPTION

TALK of conscription began in the Tory Press immediately after the outbreak of war. The most popular argument was that if it had been adopted earlier the war would never have occurred. Lost time had therefore to be made up, and it was urged, the sooner conscription was introduced the sooner the war would be over.

Beyond occasional references to the "conscriptionist intrigues" of the Northcliffe Press, the Liberals, at first, paid little heed to the agitation in favour of compulsion. As the previous chapter has shown, they were engaged in prosecuting the war by more vicarious means. But in the spring of 1915 the campaign which was being carried on by Lord Northcliffe became too powerful to be ignored, and the Government was forced to face its detractors, to yield to them, and to consent to the formation of a Coalition. The crisis arose over the supply of shells, but this question was only one of many "muddles" concerning which, for several weeks, the *Times* and *Daily Mail,* etc., had been violently attacking the Government.

The *Daily Mail* recapitulated its grievances on May 20, when it said: "Great relief is being expressed throughout the land at the prospect of an improvement in the Government machine (*i.e.,* the impending Coalition). What the present Government lacks are foresight, driving power, and cohesion. . . . Thus it is that during the last 9½ months business men have been amazed at such matters as the drink muddle, the shell muddle, the alien muddle, the soldiers' hut muddle, the recruiting muddle, and all the other muddles." This was mild language from the *Daily Mail,* which was more

often concerned to speak of the "Pro-German," the "Hide-the-Truth," or the "Do-Nothing Government." The showiest feather in Lord Northcliffe's cap was his advertisement of the *Daily Mail*—"THE PAPER THAT PERSISTENTLY FOREWARNED THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE WAR"—and he never ceased to point out to his ONE MILLION, ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR THOUSAND readers the contrast between its foresight and the blindness, if not treason, of the "Pro-German" Liberal Press which had made a stand, before the outbreak, on behalf of neutrality. "They are afraid of conscription," he jeered on May 7, 1915 (*Daily Mail*). "As we all know, they told us in effect that there would be no war with Germany, and they now tell us that there will be no conscription." "They will be proved," he said, prophetically, "to be just as wrong about conscription as they were about the war with Germany." The Liberals' negotiations to bring in other countries, reported in the preceding chapter, left him cold. The *Daily Mail* wrote on May 17, just before Italy's intervention was secured: "One sign that we really grasp the crisis will be forthcoming when we cease to expect other people to help us out of our troubles. First," it said, "it was Russia, then Rumania. To-day it is the Italians and the Americans." Conscription, it evidently thought, should begin at home.

At the beginning of May, 1915, the *Daily News* became excited. On May Day it had a leader, "Mr. Asquith or Lord Northcliffe?" which said: "The country, we hope, is taking note of the campaign against the Government which Lord Northcliffe is conducting day by day in his various newspapers. . . . It is in the *Times* that the frontal attack is being made. There, day by day, in the leader columns or in the military notes, there is conducted a definite scheme of sapping and mining, the obvious purpose of which is to destroy confidence in Mr. Asquith and the Government. . . . We shall not discuss the merits of the attack. It is those who make it, and the purpose they have in view, with which we are concerned. And in this connection we shall ask whether the experience which the public has in Lord Northcliffe and his military critic has been such as to warrant them in taking them as their

philosophers and friends. It was the *Times* which published that cruel story of the plight of the British army after Mons. . . . It was the *Times* military critic who said that Namur would hold out three months at the very moment that it had fallen. It was the same gentleman who, in August, prophesied that the Russians would be in Berlin in two months.[1] . . . Is the country going, in Lincoln's phrase, to 'swop horses' while crossing this unprecedented stream, simply because Lord Northcliffe has set his heart on showing that he is powerful enough to make and unmake Ministries?''

What possible alternative was there, cried the *Daily News,* to Mr. Asquith? Nevertheless, by the 19th, a situation had arisen in which the *Daily News* said ''it was useless to deny that reconstruction was possible.'' It was all the fault of the Northcliffe Press, of course, but there it was, and had to be faced bravely. When the Coalition between Liberals and Tories was formed, A.G.G. smote his breast as he wrote on ''the tragic close of a great drama,'' ''the pitiful ending of a great story.'' ''There is no one for whom Liberalism means the vital principle of human society who does not feel to-day that a great fight has been quenched and that the darkness which has come upon the earth in these days has been deepened.'' His thoughts went back to ''that triumphant dawn ten years ago.'' He saw again ''the historic scene in the Albert Hall when 'C.-B.,' who had borne the flag so bravely during the dark days of reaction, appeared before the country at the head of a Liberal Government.'' The emotions of that time, he declared, could never be forgotten; ''it seemed that, at last, democracy's title-deeds were secured.'' ''And now,'' he lamented, ''the end has come; it is a tragic end.'' Lord Northcliffe won his first[2] great victory in the war, he admitted, when he succeeded in forcing the resignation of Lord Haldane; ''his second object was, undoubtedly, the introduction of conscription.'' ''The country,'' he

[1] Similar miscalculations had been made by the *Daily News.*

[2] Was it not his second victory, the first being, upon A.G.G.'s own admission (see Open Letter to Lord Northcliffe, *Daily News,* Dec. 5, 1914), this country's entrance into the war?

concluded, "will deserve any disaster that can befall it if it permits his (Lord Northcliffe's) sinister influence to play with its destinies again."

The change of Government did not quench the conscriptionists' "plot." The Northcliffe Press continued to announce the approach of conscription:[3] the Liberals continued optimistically to pooh-pooh the idea. While the *Daily Mail* was inquiring (July 1) "Is the National Register making you *think?*" and adding that it would act "as a gentle hint to each one of us that we are all going to be called upon to do something—probably something we have never done before, certainly something that will disturb our individual lives," the *Daily News* was reposing upon Mr. Asquith's statement (July 6) that registration was *not* a prelude to compulsion, and replenishing its confidence from the unanimous vote against conscription passed by the Trades Union Congress at Bristol. "Any hope that the conscriptionist campaign may have had of success is now crushed by the emphatic voice of

[3] See *Daily Mail*, July 10, 1915.—"COMPULSION NEARER": LORD KITCHENER'S CITY SPEECH: "Sir E. Carson and Lord Derby both spoke directly of the alternative of compulsion, and it was extraordinary how the first reference to the subject exalted the audience to enthusiasm. . . . The meeting burst into a flame of enthusiasm when he (Sir E. Carson) asked whether anyone could doubt that if the voluntary system failed the Government should apply compulsion."

See *Daily Mail*, July 14, 1915.—Compulsion Much Nearer: Lord Lansdowne's Declaration: At present the Government cannot guarantee that they will be able to bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion without compulsion.

See *Daily Mail*, Sept. 4.—Women of England demand National Service: Historic meeting: Soldiers' Wives and Mothers: Etc., etc.

See *Daily Mail*, Sept. 7.—Recruiting by Blackmail: otherwise, "Moral Pressure." "We all know what this means. When oratory and mass meetings have done their turn, canvassers armed with the pink form must get to work. The 'moral pressure' will take the now familiar form of badgering, pursuing, persecuting, holding up to the odium of his neighbours every man of military age. The mothers will again be importuned to say 'Go.' The girls will be asked whether their 'best boy' is in khaki . . . there will be a boom in the white feather trade, and every device that has humiliated us in the eyes of our Allies, of our enemies, and of neutral lands, will once more be employed to prop up the 'voluntary' system in its decrepitude."

Labour," it wrote on September 8. The emphatic voice of Labour died down. "The Plot" thickened. By the middle of October, Mr. Henderson and other official members of the Labour Party were said (see *Daily News*, October 14) to have been won over. The execution of Nurse Cavell made recruiting "red hot" for a few days,[4] but despite the use made of this deed by the Liberal Press, the response to Lord Derby's last appeal for single men did not satisfy the conscriptionists. The *Daily News* worked as hard for the retention of the voluntary system as it had worked before the outbreak of war for neutrality. The following are extracts from its pages and headlines:

Dec. 4, 1915. ONLY SIX MORE DAYS: LORD DERBY SAYS A SUPREME EFFORT IS STILL NEEDED.

Dec. 7, 1915. FIVE DAYS MORE: LAST APPEAL TO ELIGIBLE MEN.

Dec. 8, 1915. JOIN NOW: NO EXTENSION AFTER SATURDAY.

Dec. 9, 1915. RUSH TO THE COLOURS: OFFICIALS WORKING NIGHT AND DAY: A FINAL BOOM.

Dec. 10, 1915. GREAT RUSH TO THE COLOURS: REMARKABLE SCENES: ALL RECORDS BROKEN.

Dec. 11, 1915. DO IT NOW: LAST DAY UNDER DERBY SCHEME: RECRUITING OFFICES OVERWHELMED.

TO-DAY'S THE DAY! A LAST WORD TO ONE WHO HESITATES," by A.G.G.

(The "Last Word" contained the appeal: "Which is to rule? The issue of the war will decide whether Liberalism or Imperialism is to be the governing influence in the world.")

Dec. 15, 1915. RECRUITING RESULTS SAID TO HAVE EXCEEDED K. OF K.'S DEMANDS.

Dec. 19, 1915. SNOWED UNDER: LORD DERBY ON RECRUITING.

On December 29 the Cabinet's decision in favour of

[4] A.G.G. wrote, Oct. 23, 1915: "The Bishop of London rightly interprets the effect upon the nation of this awful crime when he says that it makes an end of the talk of compulsion. The blood of this brave woman will be the seed of armed men."

compulsion being applied to single men of military age who had not attested was announced. The conscriptionists rejoiced openly at their victory. Sir John Simon resigned from the Cabinet. The *Daily News* could not, however, bring itself to quit Mr. Asquith or to abandon the idea of national solidarity. It lamented the conscriptionists' triumph but, because Mr. Asquith was at the helm, remained constant to the Government. "For after all, it is Mr. Asquith who has introduced the Bill, and it is his personality that has enabled the country to weather the storm so far without a breach in its solidarity. If we are to accept this dangerous innovation in our national life, it is better that we should accept it from his rather than from any other hand, for we know that he has come to this decision unwillingly, that he has yielded to considerations which are above suspicion, and that he will limit the operation of the system strictly to its present military needs."

On January 7, 1916, the Compulsion Bill passed the House of Commons with a majority of 298 votes. The Labour Congress, meeting on the same day, rejected the Bill by an overwhelming majority. The *Daily News* was afraid of a General Election. That, it said, would "create a breach in our national life that would be irreparable." In other words, an election would have shown too clearly whether Mr. Asquith or Lord Northcliffe ruled the country. It suggested "a plain way out of the peril that confronts us." This was to reopen the group system—to pass the Bill but to delay its operation in order that ample time might be given for the "aftermath" of the Derby scheme. "When that aftermath is harvested, we have every confidence that it will be found that the stray straws left ungathered are in a very real sense negligible, and that the Military Service Bill, limited strictly to the period of the war, has been made a dead letter by the willing service of the nation. In achieving that end, we shall preserve the solidarity of the country, avoid a new Ministerial crisis, remove all the suspicions that dictated the decision of the Labour Congress yesterday, and escape the incalculable mischief of a General Election in the midst of the war." The

Derby group system was reopened and, confident that its results in a few weeks would make the Bill a dead letter, the *Daily News* gave up worrying, and comforted itself with the thoughts that the Government was at least behaving as it should with regard to Ireland[5] and the conscientious objector.[6] It was also encouraged by the decision reached by the Labour Conference at Bristol on January 27—"8 to 1 against compulsion, but no agitation to repeal the Bill." This attitude was entirely congenial to the *Daily News*. It never minded, in fact it approved of opposition so long as opposition did not upset the solidarity of the country. Its leader (January 28), "The Vindication of Labour," said "the decisions reached by the Labour Party at Bristol are a signal demonstration of the triumph of right feeling and good sense."

In April, 1916, another recruiting crisis arose. The pressure was understood to arise from Mr. Lloyd George, which fact, said the *Daily News,* "has given gravity to an otherwise negligible agitation carried on under the auspices of Lord Northcliffe." . . . "We are in peril of drifting to a Government of extremists who think in terms of dictatorship and dream, not of inspiring the nation with the splendid spirit of a democracy fighting for the liberties of democracy, but of a nation dragooned and militarised. . . . Mr. Asquith and the Coalition Government alone stand between the country and that peril."

On May 3 the headlines were: "COMPULSION FOR ALL AT ONCE: PREMIER'S CANDID STATEMENT IN COMMONS." The leader was entitled "The Last Phase," and recorded: "Yesterday Mr. Asquith announced that to-day he would bring in a Bill

[5] *Daily News,* Jan. 18, 1916.—"Nothing could have been better or of happier augury than the temper of the discussion yesterday on the subject of the exclusion of Ireland from the operations of Conscription."

[6] *Daily News,* Jan. 20, 1916.—"On the whole the manner in which the Government have decided to meet the case of the C.O. seems very fair and equitable. It is unthinkable that the first measure of military compulsion carried in modern times in this country should have as its first effect a religious persecution and the imprisonment of some thousands of generally law-abiding citizens."

applying compulsion all round. . . . Mr. Asquith has made his final surrender. . . . He has been outmanœuvred in this long and squalid battle. . . . It would be idle to assume that he has bought off the enemy by his final concession." Mr. Lloyd George was soon afterwards in high spirits among an admiring crowd at Conway, busy with the argument that compulsion was a democratic measure. We have not space to reproduce A.G.G.'s open letters to Mr. Lloyd George during this period.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile Mr. Wilson had begun to enunciate his principles, but as he was still under the impression that "with the causes and objects of the war America has no concern" (May 27) little attention to him was paid by the Liberal Press. The Somme advance was prospering; the negotiations with Rumania were going on well; the blockade of Germany was telling, and the Allies were recovering hopes of victory. In September, Rumania having come in, all the statesmen were making speeches saying "the end is near," and on the 29th Mr. Lloyd George, in his "Knock-Out Blow" interview, declared: "Britain will tolerate no intervention now." (Except, of course, from Lord Northcliffe.) A.G.G. was sufficiently uplifted in spirit to write (September 30) on "The Pilgrim's Chorus." "The Pilgrim's theme (as in Tannhaüser) emerges through the tumult with unfaltering tread. . . . Through all this tumult of passion, the Church strikes the theme of the Pilgrim's Chorus. To-morrow the National Mission of Repentance and Hope is inaugurated, and in the coming days the spiritual motif will be kept running with increasing volume through all our activities. . . ." A "nonstop battle" was going on on the Somme; Germany was making peace proposals, but the Pilgrim's Chorus was drowning her utterances. "No patched-up masquerade of Peace," said Mr. Asquith, and there was no criticism from the *Daily News* when in the House of Commons Mr. Lloyd George declared (October 11, 1916) that in his famous "no intervention" interview he spoke for the Cabinet and the Allies.

Von Mackensen advanced in Rumania—the Rumanians crumpled up. Bucharest fell. Then Lord Northcliffe again intervened. On December 4 the Press Bureau issued the notice that "the Prime Minister, with a view to the most effective prosecution of the war, has decided to advise His Majesty to consent to a reconstruction of the Government." The *Daily News* leader said: "The Crisis." "Let the House of Commons in the critical week that is before it realise that the stakes that are being played for in this gamble involve not only the issue of the war but the very fate of this Empire. If it realises that it will stamp with ruthless heel upon this squalid conspiracy. It will decide that the Government of this country shall not pass from Parliament and its constitutional executive to a mob of shrieking dervishes in the Press. It will take its stand at the back of Mr. Asquith . . . it knows that it can trust him. . . . The attack has not succeeded, and we believe it will not succeed." "It is useless," it continued on the following day (December 5) "to attempt to pursue all the false scents which are laid down in order to trick the country into believing that this is an honest crisis. . . . You are told in one quarter that it is about Rumania; secondly, that it is the strategic issue of East and West; thirdly, the conflict about Man-Power." It was none of these, said the *Daily News*: there was deliberate intent to wreck. "Three men, above all others, represent the spirit and indomitable purpose of this nation in the sight of the world. They are Mr. Asquith, Lord Grey, and Mr. Lloyd George. That triumvirate is our guarantee to our Allies and our challenge to the enemy. The attempt to dismember it is a crime, not against this country only, but against the cause of civilisation and democracy all the world over. We refuse to believe that that crime will be perpetrated." (When it was perpetrated, they still refused to believe it.)

On December 6 Mr. Asquith resigned. The Lobby correspondent of the *Daily News* reported that "the conflict of opinion which had arisen between Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Asquith as to the character of the War Council and the Prime Minister's relationship to it had ended in the resig-

nation of Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Asquith refusing to accede to all Mr. George's requests." The Conservative Ministers followed suit, and so the Coalition ended. The *Daily News* leader said: "Mr. Asquith goes" . . . . "one of the most sinister incidents in all the history of this nation." "He has been brought not by the will of the nation, not by the verdict of Parliament, but by a crusade in the Press engineered by Lord Northcliffe . . . . a humiliation to the country . . . . a menace to the future."

Mr. Lloyd George became Prime Minister. "Lord Northcliffe," said the *Daily News* bitterly (December 9) "is stated to have said that he had no intention of joining the new Cabinet, adding that 'I prefer to sit in Printing House Square and Carmelite House.' The import of that phrase will be lost on no one."

9

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, THE COMING IN OF AMERICA, AND THE PEACE OF BREST-LITOVSK

With the fall of Mr. Asquith, the Liberal Press adopted a more critical attitude towards the policy of the Government. Its confidence in the purity of the Allies' war aims showed signs of weakening. There had been moments, even during Mr. Asquith's administration, when the Liberals had not felt quite happy in their idealism, but these moments had been short-lived. For instance, when in May, 1915, Japan had sent an ultimatum to China, demanding preferential, and in some cases exclusive, rights in the Shantung peninsula, the Liberal Press were momentarily dismayed. The *Daily News* said (May 6): "It would not be easy to parallel such demands from one Power to another. In many respects they were more stringent than the demands made by Austria upon Serbia. China had done nothing to incur such a penalty. It offered no menace to Japan. If it were a military nation, its right to the quiet possession of itself would never have been challenged. . . . *It will be the last and bitterest tragedy of this war if one of its consequences is that an unoffending nation whose independence and integrity the Anglo-Japanese alliance guaranteed is to be despoiled by one of the signatories to that alliance.*" But such moods of pessimism were short-lived. No echo of the doubts expressed in the above reflection found its way into the *Daily News* comments upon the secret treaty with Italy, then in the making, of which the Liberal Press, as their comments show, can scarcely have been ignorant.[1]

[1] That treaty gave to Italy the South Tyrol, with its solid German

But that treaty was negotiated by Mr. Asquith's Government, and the *Daily News* had taken its stand at the back of Mr. Asquith and thought that it knew that it could trust him. He, Lord Grey, and Mr. Lloyd George had represented "the spirit and indomitable purpose of this nation in the sight of the world." That "triumvirate," it had said, was "our guarantee to our Allies and our challenge to the enemy." (*Daily News,* December 15, 1916.) The guarantee and the challenge had now been broken down. The triumvirate had been dismembered by Lord Northcliffe. Of that fact the *Daily News* was painfully aware. Mr. Asquith had been outmanœuvred in the long and squalid battle; his downfall was a humiliation to the country and a menace to the future. A.G.G. saw "Perils Ahead" as he looked forward. (December 11, 1916.) "Dark Forces" were gathering. It was touch and go whether the forces of light and liberty would come out top.

We do not, however, discover the full extent of Liberal dejection during this period until *after* the outbreak of the Russian revolution, March 16, 1917. Not until that great event had come to rebaptise and confirm all their hopes and expectations did the Liberals, then in a frenzy of exaltation, disclose how near to despair in the preceding period they had been. Before the revolution, the Liberal Press had consoled itself as best it could with the prospect of American intervention, made inevitable by Germany's announcement (February 1, 1917) of the unrestricted submarine campaign. The *Daily News* of this date hoped and trusted that this would finish the job with America, and a month later its Washington correspondent reported: "It may be *safely* said that the country (*i.e.*, America) is nearer war." The substantial advantages that would accrue from America's entry had been long enjoyed in expectation by the entire British Press, but President Wilson's delay in breaking with Germany, his ambiguous pronouncements, such as the speech

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population; Dalmatia, containing 3 per cent. only of Italians; most of Albania, and a slice of Turkey, to say nothing of territorial rights in Africa and the East.

(January 22) on "Peace Without Victory," had reduced this country, menaced as it was by the submarine danger, short of men as well as of food and shipping, to a state of agonised suspense. Imports were being restricted, there was talk of rationing, women were being enlisted for the army, and the contemplation of the famine-stricken plight of Germany and Austria was growing less agreeable to those who were beginning to have fears of being hungry themselves. Sir Douglas Haig's prophecy of "The Coming Break-Through" ("We shall break the German front completely—we shall strike without respite and terribly, right up to the total destruction of the enemy's army," February 15, 1917), the "Splendid Success of the War Loan," Mr. Lloyd George's "Inspiring Message to France" ("When John Bull gets his teeth in"), the fall of Bagdad, acted from time to time as stimulants, but Liberal idealists were at bottom discouraged and disappointed, while the reactionary Press was openly rejoicing that at last the "rubbish of Liberalism" had been swept on to the dust heap.

On March 16, 1917, came the news of the Russian Revolution. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the effect it had upon the Liberals. They arose immediately from their dejection and tuned their harps. Wagnerian themes suggested themselves. A.G.G. wrote, March 17, on "The Twilight of the Gods." This was "the greatest victory that had yet fallen to the Allies"; it made the war really one of ideals at last. "It is because Russia has appeared officially before the world as the representative of the ancient darkness that the issue of the war has seemed unclear and obscure. The obscurity is dissipated. The issue stands out. Russia stands with her face towards the light. The twilight of the gods has come indeed. There remains only one throne where the ancient idol is still elevated. To-day, Hohenzollernism stands alone in all the world, a solitary reminiscence of a creed outworn."

In addition to these good tidings, war between America and Germany was now reported to be "certain." A.G.G. wrote, March 24, "What of the night?" Apart from food and ship peril, the night, he declared, went well, and Amer-

ica would soon be in it. On April 3, the headlines were "AMERICA IN WITH ALL HER RESOURCES." The enthusiasm of the *Daily News* knew no bounds. Naturally, it laid first stress on the ships and money that America would bring in with her, but added: "We should convey a wholly false impression if we suggested that the emotion created in this country by the President's speech (*i.e.*, the speech to Congress declaring war) was due to its bearing on the war. It was due to something deeper even than this. In this great utterance we seem to hear at last the authentic voice of humanity stating the issue and pronouncing the judgment, awakening the conscience of the world to the mighty things at stake. Never in history have there been such declarations as those made in the past few days in Russia and in Washington. Deep has answered to deep, and across the sundering ocean the democracy of America clasps the hands of the democracy of Russia, freed at last from the gyves of the centuries. In the light of this prodigious union we see the issue of the war emerge with a grave simplicity of outline."

The leading articles continued from day to day in this exultant strain until Easter, when an even more sublime note was struck as befitting the occasion.[2] Several Liberal journalists wrote Easter hymns. The most impressive, perhaps, was Mr. James Douglas's in the *Daily News* of April 9:

> "I hear a noise of breaking chains,
> I hear a sound of opening doors;
> It comes from Transatlantic plains
> Across the green Atlantic floors.

[2] See, for example, A.G.G. on The Easter Sun, April 7. "Winter has gone out of our souls," he wrote . . . "through the mist of doubt the Sun of Easter flashes its triumphant message: 'The world is set free.' President Wilson nailed on the mast of the world the forgotten ideals with which we began the struggle, repudiated the eternal hates and revenges that would make this world a hell for our children, pointed with the finger of embattled Freedom at the bloodstained system that has dragged Europe to ruin, pronounced the doom of the despots in every land. The Romanoffs have gone, William Hohenzollern stands on his lonely pinnacle a solitary insult to freedom."

"She sings the old redeeming songs
That Lincoln taught her lips to sing;
The death songs of a thousand wrongs,
The birth songs of a thousand springs.

"No iron-throated hymn of hate
She chants to Odin or to Thor,
For Holy Freedom is her mate
And Liberty her Emperor.

"She gathers Russia to her breast,
The old republic greets the new—
Her partner splendidly confessed,
Fit for our League of Honour True.

"And Italy, lashed by Austrian whips,
Salutes with pride her banner blown
O'er the last autocrat's eclipse
And the last tyrant on his throne.

"And Britain with her sea-knit brood,
Locked fast in world-wide conflict grim,
Hears the high call of her own blood
In Woodrow Wilson's Battle Hymn."

There was a luncheon party at the Savoy to celebrate the event. "Gathered for lunch between the twined flags of America and Britain," wrote an ecstatic reporter, "we seemed to have recaught the glad, early spirit of the war. Youth was everywhere . . . an incubus of doubt was lifted. Even through the tobacco smoke, America's clear young eyes shone with that utter faith in a just cause which is the assurance of victory." The Prime Minister, who was present, was not in religious but in sporting mood. Referring to the number of "bunkers" we had been on during the last three years, he said: "We have got a good niblick and have struck right on to the course."

All parties joined in the welcome to America, but rejoicings at the Russian Revolution were confined to the Lib-

eral and Labour Press. The Tories foresaw quite correctly that Russia could no longer be counted upon for military purposes. They did not connect the Revolution with Easter; there were no hymns in the *Morning Post*. The *Liberals* were so busy recapturing the glad, early spirit of the war that the material aspects of the situation did not at first trouble them. But, as Easter passed, they found their own spiritual temperature several degrees above that of public opinion generally, and turned from thanksgiving services and hymn-making to face the facts. The submarine menace was growing ominous—alarming reports of U-boat sinkings were announced—there was talk of compulsory rationing, and the King had issued an appeal to his people to eat less. But apart from these disquieting features, which the Liberals were inclined to think could be met by putting down beer and racehorses (both of which consumed grain), and resorting to communal kitchens, the true, Liberal significance of the Russian Revolution and of America's entry was apparently being ignored by the Government. On April 28, Mr. Lloyd George made a speech which showed that he could not have read the *Daily News*, for he said nothing about the grand fact that the American democracy had ranged themselves on the side of freedom, and never remarked on the Russian Revolution at all.[3] Moreover, in consequence of this apparent official indifference to the ideal issue, a loss of faith in this country was growing in the minds of Russian democrats, and it was reported that they were even sceptical of the assurances of Messrs. Purdy, Henderson and Roberts, who had been dispatched by the British Government to tell the Russians that they must on no account consider the German proposal of a separate peace. M. Kerensky's declaration of "No Annexations and No Indemnities" had met with no response from the Allied Powers, and though the British Liberal Press maintained vigorously that there was no conflict whatever between the aims of Russia and the Allies, the suspicions of Russia continued to exist.

For a time, despite the Allies' failure to state aims, it

[3] See the *Daily News* criticism of Lloyd George's speech, April 28, 1917.

seemed, at least to the Liberal Press,[4] that the danger of a separate peace had been averted and that Kerensky had the extremists well in hand. The Russian July offensive was launched to a chorus of Liberal praise. "Glorious News," "Victorious Russia," were the headlines in the *Daily News*. A.G.G. breathed again. "Not since war began have I felt so real a peace about the issue of it all as I do to-day," he wrote on July 14. "The remarkable success attending the Russian army is due primarily, no doubt, to the spirit of freedom abroad in it. There is no spur in war like an ideal."

The spirit of freedom abroad in the Russian army did not, however, make for prolonged success. Before the end of the month a Russian *débacle* was reported; discipline vanished, and whole units melted away. "The Tragedy of Russia" had to be substituted for the "victorious" headlines. "The Russian army would seem to have ceased to exist as a military instrument," woefully announced the *Daily News*.

Kerensky made a fresh effort to "save" Russia. Another Coalition was formed. The Stockholm Conference was pressed vigorously, and had Labour delegates from Allied countries attended it the results might conceivably have strengthened Kerensky's position and maintained him in power. But Labour and Liberalism in this country were so suspicious of being involved in anything that looked like preliminary peace negotiations, even with German Socialists, that though the British Labour Party accepted the invitation to Stockholm they also accepted the Government's refusal to grant passports to their delegates. Knock-out blow ideas were still prevalent—or at any rate the Liberal rendering of them, *i.e.*, "no peace with the accursed thing, German militarism."

[4] See leader, "The New Garibaldi" (Kerensky), May 21: "The news from Russia is exceedingly good . . . puts an end to the suggestion that the revolution may commit suicide by coming to terms with Kaiser." See leader, "Light in Russia," June 19: "The news from Russia continues to be good . . . the All-Russia Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates is overwhelmingly on the side of the Government against a separate peace with Germany . . . indicates that growing sobriety of aim and that tendency towards solidarity of purpose of which we have never despaired."

President Wilson, "with his accustomed grasp of facts and mastery of words," had just restated this theme (August 30). American enthusiasm for the war was tremendous,[5] and the moment was fast approaching when America, with all her resources, would effectively be in. A cleavage between parties in Germany on the No Annexations—No Indemnities question had also been apparent for some time to the Liberal Press, but though the German Chancellor, Herr Michaelis, had accepted the Reichstag resolution,[6] which had been carried by 214 votes to 116, adding the reservation "as I understand it," it was generally felt in Liberal circles that a good deal more blood would have to flow before Herr Michaelis's understanding reached the British level. "Fewer sinkings" by U-boats were now being reported; we were, according to the Prime Minister, distinctly "beginning to *get* the submarine," and though the German air-raids were causing considerable anger and alarm the feeling against reprisals had been completely overcome. From day to day the public was cheered by statistics of the tons of bombs that were being dropped by our airmen on German towns, and on October 10 Sir A. Geddes, speaking at Nottingham, said: "Before the next twelve moons have passed many a German city, many a German hamlet, will have heard the song of our aircraft and have listened cowering for the bomb bursts that will mark their flight." Further, victories were taking place in Flanders and Mesopotamia.

Nevertheless, crisis after crisis occurred in Russia. The Korniloff revolt collapsed, but the new German offensive began. An Austro-German invasion of Italy started, and the news

[5] See *Daily News*, Sept. 11, New York telegram: "The war has created a tremendous demand for Bibles in the United States. Many of the publishers report their presses running from 15 to 18 hours a day, but they are still several weeks behind orders."

[6] A similar resolution brought forward by the Pacifist group in the British House of Commons was defeated by 148 votes to 19 (July 26), but, the *Daily News* pointed out on July 27, the Reichstag Resolution, though an interesting sign of a return to sanity on the part of the German people, had unfortunately no executive authority. "The German Government is not responsible to the Reichstag as our Government is responsible to Parliament."

from those parts was serious in the extreme. On November 2, Kerensky made the tragic announcement, "Russia is now worn out." A week later there was another revolution: Kerensky was deposed and the Bolsheviks came into power. This, coupled with the continued advance of the enemy into Italy, made the outlook for the Allies very black. There was little light in the sky even for A.G.G. to contemplate beyond the fact that we were just on the point of winning the Holy Land for the Jews. On November 14, Mr. Lloyd George made a speech in Paris on the blunders of the Allies, the upshot of which was to transfer the seat of executive authority from London to Versailles and to strengthen the political dictatorship at home. Lord Northcliffe published a letter to the Prime Minister declining the post of Air Minister, which no one but himself, and assumedly Mr. Lloyd George, knew that he had been invited to hold. "We may laugh at this colossal jest," wrote A.G.G., "but no one to-day can be blind to the menace of it all. The democracy, whose bulwark is Parliament, has been unseated, and mobocracy, whose dictator is Lord Northcliffe, is in power. Mr. Lloyd George is in office, but his colleague is Mayor of the Palace, and has announced with a due accent of mystery that he is dissatisfied with the caretakers whom he has left in charge. He is going to preserve his freedom, for he has higher things in store for himself than an office under Mr. Lloyd George. The king does not take office; he bestows office. I do not know whether we have touched the depth of our humiliation. I do not think we have. I think there are graver things before us in the near future than in the happy past we should have dreamed possible."

From now onwards the *Daily News* began partially to face the facts. That is to say, it commented freely and unceasingly not only upon the Allies' failure to state their aims, which it admitted was mainly responsible for the "cataclysm" in Russia, but also upon signs and portents indicating that Allied statesmen had other aims than those it wished, and consequently believed, them to have. M. Clemenceau had recently dismissed the idea of a League of Nations as fan-

tastic. That was a disturbing thought. The censorship at home, the war upon opinion, the raids upon the office of the National Council for Civil Liberties, the treatment of conscientious objectors, suggested painfully that the spirit of German militarism was winning victories here. "What, then, are we fighting for?" A.G.G. asked anxiously (November 24), with no intention, however, of listening to any answer but the one he had given since the beginning of the war. Though confronted on one side with the comments of the Tory Press and of Ministers upon Lord Lansdowne's letter[7] asking this same question, and on the other with the Bolsheviks' reply in the form of the publication of the secret treaties, this super-idealist refused to face the truth. He turned away from unpleasant disclosures such as these to draw fresh comfort from President Wilson's utterances (see *Daily News* leader, December 5, "The True War Aims"), from "Jerusalem Delivered" (December 11), and from a speech upon "A Clean Peace" by his defeated leader, Mr. Asquith.

On December 2, preliminary peace negotiations began between the Bolsheviks and Germany. On the 7th the former invited the Allies to take part in the Conference, and on Christmas Day the Germans accepted the Russian formula of "no annexations and no indemnities" as a basis for peace, provided the Allies came in too. Though horrified at any idea

[7] Lord Lansdowne's letter pleading for a statement of aims was published in the *Daily Telegraph* of Nov. 29. It had previously been refused by the *Times*, which afterwards described it as "foolish and mischievous." The *Morning Post's* comment was "mental hypocrisy." The *Daily Mail* said "Ruin and Slavery"; the *Daily Express* spoke of "the menace of the future." Reuter made the following statement which it was "authoritatively informed" was "the view of His Majesty's Government": "Lord Lansdowne in his letter spoke only for himself. . . . The views expressed in the letter do not in any way represent the views of H.M.'s Government, nor do they indicate in the slightest degree that there is any change or modification in the war policy of this country. . . . This war policy has been spoken of in different words, but perhaps is best summed up in the recent utterance of M. Clemenceau: 'The War Aims for which we are fighting are Victory.' Mr. Bonar Law referred to the letter as 'a national misfortune.'"

of peace with Germany,[8] the *Daily News* was of the opinion that the Allies should without hesitation seize the opportunity of making "a candid and reasoned statement of their war aims and their peace terms." Mr. Arthur Ransome, its correspondent in Russia, never wrote more vigorous warnings to the Allies than during these critical days. "I am convinced," he wrote on January 1, 1918, "that our only chance of defeating the German designs is to publish terms as near the Russian terms as possible, and by taking a powerful hand at the proposed Conference to help at the same time the democratic movement in Germany and the Russians in forcing the German Government in the direction which it, partly under pressure from below and partly with a cunning view to the future, has had to take." The editorial staff became infected with Mr. Ransome's sense of urgency. "The disaster (of a possible dragooning of Russia by Germany) may be prevented by prompt action on the part of the Allies. Let them declare in clear, unequivocal words terms of settlement which repudiate conquest and aggrandisement and which prove conclusively that the capital object of the war is to organise the world for peace." "Why are we dumb?" it cried on January 4. "We are witnessing something which the world has not seen since the French Revolution . . . . we are witnessing a straight fight between a nation armed with an idea and a nation armed with diplomatic cunning. Are we to be silent and passive witnesses of this momentous conflict? Are the Allies to stand by and take no part in it as if it were an idle game in which we

[8] See, for instance, A.G.G. (Nov. 10) on "Russia, the Kaiser and Peace," dealing with the ominous possibility that the Kaiser might be meditating making a fair peace on the West on condition that he were given a free hand in the East. There was an echo to that thought in this country, and when A.G.G. thought of it his blood turned cold. See also Gilbert Murray on "The New Year" (*Daily News*, Jan. 1, 1918): "If we make peace now we make peace with Militarism triumphant. . . If we propose peace now we are offering terms to the very dragon we set out to destroy. Remember we are fighting for a just peace. Let us face facts. Let us not trouble too much about our Northcliffes and our Carsons. When a different spirit begins to rule in Germany and Austria there will naturally come a change here and in France."

have no interest? That is the question for the democracy of this country and for the democracy of every Allied country. For nearly a year we have played with the Russian Revolution. For nearly a year we have missed chance after chance of making it our most powerful instrument of victory and the swiftest means of bringing the war to an end and establishing a clean peace. Is this tragedy of incompetence to continue? Is our destiny to be the sport of men who, while giving lip service to Democracy stand cold and aloof from Democracy's supreme agony? If we are fighting for the overthrow of Prussian militarism and Prussian autocracy, why are we not throwing all our energies to the support of the one nation which has staked everything for the naked principles about which we talk in muffled phrases. . . . This is the moment for a great gesture by the Allies. . . . The moment must not be lost."

The moment was lost. No great gesture by the Allies was made. The Germans withdrew their general acceptance of the Russian principles, since that acceptance had been conditional upon a similar acceptance by the Allies.

In the meantime, Mr. Lloyd George, speaking on January 5 at a Trade Union Conference, made a statement of terms which abandoned some of the claims put forward in the Note of January 10, 1917. The secret treaty with Russia, repudiated by the Revolution, was no longer to be held valid. Turkey was not to be deprived of Constantinople or of Thrace. But the non-Turkish provinces of Turkey were to be ceded, and the secret treaties with Italy and Rumania (involving the cession of Trentino, Trieste, and Transylvania) were to be adhered to. Germany was to give up Alsace, Polish Posen, and her African colonies without a plebiscite, except in the case of the colonies where it was manifestly impractical. The *Daily News* was delighted with the statement. "A Clean Peace," it proclaimed (January 7), "a landmark in the war"; "on these lines the nation can go forward with a clean conscience and a firm purpose. We have laid down the lines of a clean peace. . . . It is a peace of the peoples. . . . Deep is calling unto deep."

On January 8, President Wilson announced his Fourteen Points. Amazing as it may seem, the *Daily News* insisted that they were identical not only with the Russian principles but with the Premier's statement. "The common programme of the American President and the British Prime Minister is consistent at every point with the policy on which the Russian delegation took their stand at Brest-Litovsk. . . . Russia can no longer charge her Allies with disloyalty to the principles she is so resolutely upholding. . . . In all essentials the peace of M. Lenin's ideal is the peace of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Wilson. It would be the most profound misfortune if Russia insisted on imagining—and by imagining helped to create—a cleavage between herself and the Allies where no ground for cleavage exists."

What the *Daily News* Liberals were thinking of in insisting upon identity between the 14 points, the Russian principles, and Mr. Lloyd George's statement of terms, where no ground for maintaining this identity existed, it is difficult to see. They were certainly not thinking about peace. They knew that the British Government and the Allies had no intention of accepting the "no annexations and no indemnities" formula, acceptance of which would have led, as the Bolsheviks hoped, to a general peace. They knew, too, for Mr. Ransome's message had made this fact perfectly clear, that the only way of preventing a separate peace between Russia and the Central Powers was to participate in negotiations for a general peace. Therefore they must have known that the threat in Mr. Lloyd George's statement to leave Russia to her fate if she concluded a separate peace with the enemy was only another way of saying that the Allies were unwilling to make peace upon any terms but their own. Why, then, faced with these same terms, wherein the claims of two secret treaties openly predominated, did they pretend they were ideal? The explanation of self-deception is insufficient here: we are forced at this juncture to charge the Liberals with insincerity. No doubt they acted, as they thought, for the best. Mr. Lloyd George's statement, made for the purpose of getting Labour's support for the new Man-Power Bill, not only

appeared to be much more moderate than it really was, but certainly was more moderate than had been expected. During the previous months, while awaiting the long-delayed statement of war aims, the Liberals had been much more anxious than they had admitted, and their relief at not finding their worst fears realised in another knock-out blow speech disposed them to be tolerant and uncritical of details. Any intention of destroying Germany was repudiated—that was an immense comfort to them—while the reference to the settlement of the Alsace-Lorraine question ("reconsideration of the great wrong of 1871") seemed to point to compromise, possibly to the principle of self-determination. They were agreeably surprised by the quiet tone of the speech; they felt that Mr. Lloyd George had taken a distinct step forward, and probably, with Mr. Wilson's hand on his shoulder, he would move still further on the road to a Clean Peace. In short, they felt confident again that Liberal ideals were prevailing;[9] the great thing was that the statement showed that the Government's terms, if not quite immaculate, were at least comparatively respectable. In the light of renewed confidence, the Russian situation seemed less ominous. Peace was probably not far off. After all, it was better on the whole for things to move slowly—it would not do to show too great a readiness for peace. The "Clyde"[10] attitude was lamentable, such Bol-

[9] For expressions of this confidence see *Daily News*, Jan. 25: "The contest between Democracy and Liberalism is not confined to Germany alone. On a greater or a lesser scale it has to be fought out in every country in the world. . . In our country we have known something of the contest, and it was not till relatively recent days that we could assure ourselves that Democracy had secured its future. . . Only in Germany are the autocrats still enthroned."

[10] The Clyde workmen had threatened to "down" tools if the Government did not declare for an armistice. See A.G.G., "A Letter to the Clyde," Jan. 19, also "A Plain Word" (to Labour), Jan. 30: "The growing insurgence of Labour is the fact that dominates the war to-day. The news from Berlin and the Clyde represent the same tendency that we have seen at work in Russia and more recently in Austria. . . If we discriminate between events in Germany and those on the Clyde it is because we believe that the future of Democracy is dependent on the overthrow of the Prussian military machine and because what is happening in Berlin points to the accomplishment of that overthrow, and what is happening on the Clyde points in precisely the opposite direction."

shevik methods could not be allowed here; and if the Conference of Allied Premiers which was shortly to meet in Paris issued a further statement of aims on the lines of the Premier's and the 14 points, the situation would be very hopeful. Though Count Hertling, the German Chancellor had rejected the Lloyd George terms, Count Czernin's reply to President Wilson had been most conciliatory, and clearly invited further discussion, which the *Daily News* Liberals were most anxious should go on.

These amiable hopes were suddenly frustrated. Liberal idealists could not keep up with the pace at which things were moving abroad. The failure of the Allies to enter into the Brest-Litovsk negotiations made Trotsky's fight a losing one, while the defection to Germany of the Ukraine—a bourgeois Government—taking with it corn to check the Austrian discontent, completed the Russian collapse. But before the peace with the Ukraine was signed, all possibility of further discussion was put an end to by the statement made by the War Council at Versailles on February 4. This statement dismissed the speeches of Hertling and Czernin as holding out no hope of an accommodation, and announced that the only immediate task lay in the vigorous prosecution of the war. The Knock-Out Blow policy, despite Liberal optimism and Liberal protest, was resumed.

10

TOWARDS THE END

"Force, force to the utmost,
force without stint or limit."
—President Wilson on the first anniversary of America's entrance into the war.

PRESIDENT WILSON'S words, quoted above, summarise the policy of the Allies from the Versailles declaration (February 4, 1918) to the Armistice. During this period there could be no mistaking their intentions. Discussion of peace terms was described as "criminal" by Mr. Balfour on February 28. Later on, Lord Robert Cecil coined the expression "peace offensive," and intimated that it could be met only by the military weapon. No declaration of Allied war aims was published, and even at the Armistice the Allies were without an agreed and declared policy.

The Liberals were deeply agitated and at times almost despairing. The situation had taken a more sinister turn than they had foreseen. They had confidently anticipated a continuance of the peace discussions with which the year had opened. These discussions had been put an end to by the Versailles Note. When Parliament reassembled on February 13 they deplored the fact that in the Address "no countenance was given to efforts to explore any path to peace except the military path." They insisted that the growing demand of the people was that military action should be accompanied by political strategy. Yet so far from such strategy being followed, the Versailles declaration showed a sinister reaction to the knock-out blow formula. Why did not the Allies make an authoritative and joint declaration of war aims? Why

had Count Czernin's obvious disposition to discuss peace terms been so summarily dismissed? Was it possible that the Allied Governments could not reconcile their claims with a common formula that could be presented to the world? Were they—oh, dreadful thought!—standing by treaties that formulated demands which, if stated, would not be ratified by the plain judgment of the belligerent peoples? Dark forces evidently reigned somewhere. Lord Northcliffe's dictatorship at home presaged no good. He had secured the dismissal of Sir W. Robertson from the War Office, he was about to get rid of Lord Jellicoe from the Admiralty. Mr. Lloyd George had just appointed him chief propagandist in enemy countries, while the Pankhursts were doing just as they liked. The situation was altogether too mysterious—it was "War in the Dark." (See *Daily News* leaders, February 14, February 20, *et seq.*)

There is no doubt, however, that this mysterious "darkness" conduced to the Liberals' clearer vision of the actual facts. From now onwards they demanded unceasingly that the Allies should state their aims and thereby relieve Liberal anxiety. Even in the fateful spring days, when the great German offensive came within an inch of success, they remained constant to this demand. At the first lull in the fighting A.G.G. wrote "Let Washington Lead." "Do not let us fob ourselves off with the camouflage of the new Man-Power Bill . . . in this pause of exhaustion Allied statesmanship must be ready. When the pause comes let us be prepared to adopt the Wilson policy as the policy of the Allies, openly, unanimously, unequivocally. Then the end will be in sight."

The Germans were temporarily beaten to a standstill. Allied statesmanship made no move. The *Daily News* in its anguish was reduced to irony. "Peace may be the culminating horror of war," it wrote (May 4). "It may be impossible permanently to avert it. But much may be done to postpone the day of disaster. Cabinet Ministers may disseminate warnings of a coming 'peace offensive.' An inspired Press can be invoked to denounce peace traps and peace perils. These are

the canons by which, at the present time, Allied diplomacy is openly governed. For the past week those papers in which the views of the War Cabinet are habitually reflected have been assiduous in their warnings of a coming 'peace trap.' On Saturday, Lord R. Cecil announced that 'a peace offensive is likely to be made, very largely against Great Britain'; that offers would be put forward likely, in the German view, to be attractive to this country, but that 'it will not be anything we could look at.'" A week later, May 11, A.G.G. wrote a letter to Lord Grey begging him to do something. According to A.G.G., the one figure which stood out "in grand relief against this awful background was the figure of the Great European, Viscount Grey, who fought so shining a battle (at the outbreak of war) against the powers of darkness," whose spirit could "alone restore the world to sanity and hope."

In this letter A.G.G. outpoured his troubles. "We have a sublime cause, but our statesmanship has betrayed it." Except for Mr. Wilson, "we look in vain for vision, or leadership, or even understanding." "There is no attempt to impress the mind of Europe with the conviction that we are fighting for a new world order. . . . The battle cries that are raised have the accents of the prize-ring or a dog-fight, and the expenditure on war aims propaganda has been worse than wasted because we have no war aims to propagate." There was a most terrible bankruptcy of moral purpose. Europe must find a voice which would echo that of President Wilson; in the general despair the thoughts of men were turning to Lord Grey for inspiration. A.G.G. said that, of course, he knew that "minor critics" would talk about the secret treaties to which Lord Grey's hand had been set. But that had been a slip of the pen. A.G.G. was sure that it wasn't the real Lord Grey who had signed these. They hadn't represented his deepest convictions. The real Lord Grey had "the vision of the new dispensation"; he would lead men into the path of enduring peace with the same high purpose and stern resolve with which four years before he had led them into war.

The Great European did not answer. The spirit of the secret treaties still ruled. The Emperor Karl's letter was

published, and threw light on the extent to which those treaties—or at least the Italian one—had stood in the way of peace in 1917. "We have to recognise the fact," commented A.G.G. mournfully (May 18) "that there have been two currents of policy on the Allied side. . . . These two policies cannot co-exist. They will not mingle. One or the other must prevail. The time has come for a clean cut with the past."

The military situation still hung in the balance, despite the flow of men from America. A.G.G. pursued the difficult task of "facing facts." "It is supremely necessary," he wrote (June 15) "that the mind of the nation should be at ease within itself. And it is not at ease. It is disturbed, puzzled, and suspicious. It is mystified. The incident of the Emperor Karl's letter has deepened the disquiet as to what we are committed to, and the absence of any clear-cut definition of policy, bringing us into line with that of America and pointing the way to the world's escape from the deadly folds of militarism, leaves it without the stimulus of the great moral argument. It sees the vast problem of Russia handled with a levity and a shiftiness of purpose that leaves the enemy more and more in possession of the field, and now it learns that Mrs. Pankhurst has been granted special facilities to go to America. For what? It sees the whole propaganda of this country in enemy lands and among our Allies handed over to the Harmsworths (Lord Northcliffe for Germany, Lord Rothermere for America), and Lord Beaverbrook, with results that may be read in the papers that come to us from abroad. . . . We need a wind to blow this miasma from the soul of the nation."

The wind did not blow. But the military situation improved. Under the influence of good news from the front, Liberal anxiety as to Allied war aims grew perceptibly less. The *Daily News* avoided commenting on Mr. Lloyd George's message to the Empire ("To stop short of victory would be to compromise the future of mankind"), and as the Allied advance swept forward it abandoned its fears and regained its old confidence in the purity of Allied intentions. *Il Penseroso* changed to *Allegro* and became *Allegretto*. It laughed at the cry being raised by German Conservative newspapers

that Germany was in danger (August 28). It was ridiculous, it said, of the *Kölnische Zeitung* to "seek to arouse its desperate countrymen by the vision of an enslaved Germany." "The notion of a convict nation can have no part in the counsels of the Allies, not necessarily out of any sentimental considerations for Germany, but because it is offensive to common sense and a peril to the plan of the new world." "The Tide of Victory Sweeps On" it announced, September 4. "The crescendo of victory gathers momentum with each day, almost with each hour. . . . We have got the whip hand as we have never got it before in this war. . . . What we are witnessing is the collapse of the prestige of the Prussian military machine. It has not fallen yet, but it is visibly tottering, and when it goes the Allies will have the greatest opportunity for constructive statesmanship that has ever fallen to the rulers of men."

The crescendo of confidence gathered momentum with every day. Past fears were almost forgotten. Now and again the *Daily News* paused in its enthusiasm to remind its readers that one thing, and one alone, was lacking to its full blessedness: *the Allies had not yet openly endorsed the Wilson aims.* This, it said, was a pity, because the one effective appeal which remained to Germany in her desperate plight was that the real aims of the Allies were no higher and no cleaner than those of her own Welt-Politik. It was not true, of course, but it would be wise to make a clear statement (October 2).

On October 7 Germany appealed to America for peace, and accepted the Wilson terms as a basis for peace negotiations. President Wilson demanded German evacuation of France and Belgium. Germany accepted the condition. The *Daily News* was still hankering after a formal declaration of aims by Great Britain, France, and Italy, but the times were so exciting that it could not feel any great anxiety on this score. "We do not think there can be any practical doubt," it wrote on October 14. "This policy (*i.e.*, the Wilson policy) has had the endorsement of *silence* from the spokesmen of the Allies." Everyone, it pointed out, accepted it, and Mr. Lloyd George had, after all, actually said that the

enemy could have peace to-morrow on the Wilson terms. President Wilson made a further demand upon Germany. Kaiserism must go. The *Daily News* felt that it was living in a fairy tale—all its dreams were coming true. "Kaiserism must go," it shouted. "Kaiserism has made the earth a shambles; Kaiserism must go as an assurance that the earth shall never be a shambles again. . . . We thank the President. . . ."

"Germany must place herself irrevocably in the hands of the Allies." This was President Wilson's "Final Word." "It is undeniably a stern demand," said the *Daily News,* "but in consenting the German people are exposing themselves to no unknown and exorbitant demands by the Allies." The Armistice terms were asked for and announced. They were rigorous. "It is quite natural that they should be rigorous," said the *Daily News,* "but the Allies must do their part by satisfying the German people that what lies beyond the Armistice is not a peace of Brest-Litovsk but a peace on the already defined Wilson basis."

Emperors and Empires were falling like the autumn leaves. Bulgaria had gone. Turkey was going. A Republic was proclaimed in Hungary. There was Revolution in Vienna. A.G.G., on that first Saturday in November, wrote on "The Hill of Vision." Did he see what lay beyond the Armistice? That question will be discussed in the ensuing chapters.

PART THREE

COMING OUT OF THE WAR

6 "... and at this day,
When a Tartarean darkness overspreads
The groaning nations; when the impious rule
By will or by established ordinance,
Their own dire agents and constrain the good
To acts which they abhor; though I bewail
This triumph, yet the pity of my heart
Prevents me not from owning that the law,
By which mankind now suffers, is most just.
For by superior energies; more strict
Affiance in each other; faith more firm
In their unhallowed principles; the bad
Have fairly earned a victory o'er the weak,
The vacillating, inconsistent good."

WORDSWORTH. "The Excursion," Book IV.

PREFACE TO PART THREE

(AS FIRST PUBLISHED)

THE Treaty of Peace between the Allies and Germany was signed at Versailles on June 28th, 1919. Two years have passed since then, years full of disillusionment as regards the achievement of the aims for which the war was believed to have been fought. There is no peace abroad, and at home, the promise of a land "fit for heroes to live in" has been fulfilled in a disagreeable way. None but heroes are fit to live in post-war England and to face the hardships and anxieties that the War and Peace have brought.

This book—a concluding volume to two studies of Liberal Idealism previously published—is addressed to those who, unwilling to cultivate heroism at the expense of humanity, are ready to look back, question and condemn. Emotion recollected in disappointment makes for satire, but it makes also for commonsense. And if the commonsense be perhaps oversuspicious of idealism, the world, after five years' experience of men's infatuated credulities, will be none the worse for that. What is wanted to avoid such catastrophes as this which has almost ruined us, is not so much a creed as a scepticism.

The war may be considered in two aspects. It may be considered as the undeniable triumph of those who were out deliberately for destruction or as the equally undeniable failure of those who hoped, by lending themselves to destruction, to build upon the ruins a better world. These people failed because, for one reason, they were never in control of the machine; they were nominally in control for a short time, but always at the mercy of less scrupulous people, and their failure was made more glaring by their persistent refusal to acknowledge their own impotence and to face the inevitable obstacles to their success.

Their authority, in the first place, was diminished by the moral weakness of their position. They had to strengthen their moral position by the myth about origins, from which issued the myth about aims, and though this was a partial protection, it did not completely stabilise them. Ambiguities in their position were continually being revealed, and so they were at a great disadvantage with their political opponents who had no ambiguities to contend with at all.

But, in the second and yet more important place, the Liberals' failure was due to their unquestioning acceptance of the feverishly-improvised gospel of Mr. Wells. When the war opened, that great prophet and Utopia planner was one of the first to proclaim the Holy War, and his articles in the *Daily News* and *Nation* were intoxicated with the "tremendous opportunity" which he thought the war offered to Liberalism for "setting the world to rights." He implored Liberals to seize this opportunity; it was one, he declared, that might never come again. He rebuked Lord Eversley, an old-fashioned Liberal, who had written a letter ("Daily News," August 20th, 1914) casting doubts upon Utopianism and suggesting that a war to reform the map of Europe and to destroy militarism might last a very long time and even then fail of its ends. That attitude, said Mr. Wells, must be shunned like the devil—Liberals must adjure "this sort of blank-mindedness, this pseudo-sage intellectual laziness, this easy dread of prematurity." *Now* was the supreme opportunity for Liberalism—"the test or condemnation of constructive Liberal thought in the world." "Let us borrow a little from the rash vigour of the types that have contrived this disaster. Let us make a truce of our finer feelings and control our dissentient passions. Let us redraw the map of Europe boldly as we mean it to be redrawn—and let us replan society as we mean it to be reconstructed. Now is the opportunity to do fundamental things that will not otherwise get done for hundreds of years." Mr. Wells did not speak to deaf ears. The flood of rash, vigorous idealism which he did so much to encourage overwhelmed the old-fashioned advocates of moderation and commonsense.

The Liberals' belief in the tremendous opportunity afforded by the war for setting the world to rights was unsound, as I have already suggested, because of the obvious superiority of those who had no aims beyond the destruction of their enemies; but it was also unsound because all deliberate reform of our fellow creatures on a large scale by violent measures is a risky thing to embark upon, and its risk is manifolded when the instrument of reform is so violent as war. I do not want here to discuss the conventional pacific dogma concerning the moral wrongness of recourse to physical force, the conceptions involved in such a dogma being, to my mind, more theoretical than real, and the responsibilities attaching to the use of what is called moral suasion appearing to me just as heavy as those attaching to physical compulsion. I want, however, to suggest certain less explored considerations bearing upon the above argument.

Slow and wasteful as man's efforts have been and are to provide for his immediate welfare, to devise hand to mouth expedients for his own material and spiritual comfort, man has nevertheless achieved a certain amount of civilisation. The average man is notoriously indifferent to big schemes of reform affecting the future; more's the pity, perhaps, but the fact remains that owing to this indifference, which can be easily accounted for if we look at our own lives and see what little space there is in them for public work, he is not exactly an expert in the way of planning reforms or of carrying them out. The needs of the present have absorbed most of his time, and it has been as much as he could do to consider his own future, let alone the future of other people. By degrees he has acquired forethought for himself and for his family, and very properly teaches his children, or before the war, at any rate, used to teach them, the fable of "la cigale et la fourmi," the grasshopper who didn't bother about the future and the ant who did. Some day, perhaps, the moral of the war may be conveyed to rising generations in the form of another fable which it did not occur to La Fontaine to write. It might be called the fable of the neutral and the belligerent, for one of the necessary types is not to be found in the insect

world, as far as I know. The belligerent was so anxious about the future that he gave no thought to the needs of the present, while the neutral, wisely, kept his eye on both. The belligerent sharpened his sword, tightened his belt and cheered his comrades by reciting the Fourteen Points to them, which many of them didn't understand. The neutral, not being under the stimulus of war-emotion stuck to the belief, despite much contempt and sundry temptations from the belligerent, that Peace, or normal life, in the hand, Prussian militarism or no Prussian militarism, was better, on the whole, than Fourteen Points in the bush.

Perhaps the fable will be popular—I shrink from prophesying. There may be even sadder fables in store—there surely will be unless there is more general recognition of the folly of the terrible religion of sacrificing the entire present to the future, which was preached during the war. It was more disturbing in effects than the religion of an after life, whose happening is, to say the least, so problematical that it doesn't so much matter what we lay up for it. But those who preached about the future after the war which they knew *would* happen, which has already happened, ought to have been more careful in their sacrifices. They ought to have considered, when they talked so irresponsibly about sacrificing the present to the future, to what extent their sacrifices would so alter the future that its requirements, from where they stood, might not be calculable at all. The future, at best, is problematical, for which reason, in normal times, we hold the balance between it and the present and measure our sacrifices accordingly. It may, even in the case of a single individual, be made unnecessarily problematical by heavy sacrifice of the present to it. But a principle that it is legitimate to act upon, a risk that it is fair to take, in the case of one individual, becomes absolutely transformed when it is taken for multitudes. And when, as in this war, every man, woman, resource, idea in the country was drawn out of its normal course and bearing, then all that could have been correctly prophesied of the future was that it would not be the normally expected future, but a changeling, born of the wilfully distorted present.

The error in thinking, so it seems to me, lay in forgetting what great masses we were dealing with when, as a nation, we embarked upon such a sacrifice. Its consequences were bound to be greater than any measurement reached by multiplication of the risk to one person. For when you introduce the multitude you introduce complexities which simple arithmetic cannot deal with, complexities which must wreck the possibility of any forecast. In matters of life and death affecting multitudes, nations, the whole world, we have, surely, no right on earth to subordinate the present to the future, to demand of the present that it shall die for the sake of the future. All our calculations of the future are ruined by such a demand, which makes the future incalculable. The only respect which, in the case of multitudes, we ought to have for the future, is respect for the present, respect and care for the life of the present so that the future may live.

This was forgotten, nay more, it was contemned, by the wise men who proclaimed and maintained the Holy War. "Our follies make me not laugh," said Montaigne, "but our wisdoms do." I do not want to laugh at the wisdoms of Liberal idealists, but one laughs sometimes to avoid tears. Their unwarranted optimism, their arrogant and irresponsible assumption that their aims were the prevailing ones, the utter absence of self-criticism, moral or spiritual modesty in their writings and speeches, made a terrible scene of intellectual disorder, a replica in the field of thought to the battlefield itself. They were the Prussians of the intellect, brandishing their shining phrases like a mailed fist, admitting no criterion of truth but their own emotions, hopes and wishes, invoking their beliefs and anathematising those of their enemies with a self-assertion as vain and lacking in breeding as any for which the Kaiser may be criticised.

Thought should bear itself as responsibly, as decorously, as action. Men's physical manners, Heaven knows, are far from perfect, but their intellectual manners are ten times worse. Good purposes, fine expressions, they have in plenty, but their thoughts are as undisciplined, as irresponsible, as egoistic, as the table manners of badly brought-up children.

The war, from the intellectual point of view, was a flow of unbridled impulse; the thought that ran alongside the engines of destruction was of a rotten quality. The world's moral currency has been debased by the extraordinary issues of beliefs, with less and less substantial backings in fact. And until it is recognised that thought must conform to rational standards, that men must learn *how* to think before they can teach others *what* to think, "tremendous opportunities" for great reconstructive tasks had better be left alone.

I.C.W.

August 20th, 1921.

COMING OUT OF THE WAR

11

IS IT PEACE?

THE tide of Allied military successes which set in in the summer of 1918 was not accompanied by any statement of peace-aims from the Allied Governments. Peace-feelers from Germany and Austria were received in silence or treated with contempt. The only comfort that English people of moderate opinion, who hoped for a reasonable settlement and dreaded the continuation of the "knock-out blow" policy, could obtain for their hopes was an address by Mr. Lloyd George to American soldiers (July 5th), in which he said that the Germans could have "peace to-morrow" on the conditions laid down by President Wilson in his speech of the day before (July 4th, 1918). But as that speech was, as Lord Lansdowne pointed out,[1] "no outline of peace *terms*, but a nobly-worded description of the things for which the associated peoples of the world were fighting," Germany had no means of proving her acceptance except by proffering willingness to negotiate, which the Allies still, determinedly, scorned.

The fifth year of the war opened. Allied military successes continued. The intense and growing desire for peace in Germany, as well as in Austria, was reflected not only in the Press [2] and in the Ministerial crises, but in the speeches of the

[1] Letter to Lord Beauchamp, read at 3rd "Lansdowne" Conference, Essex Hall, July 31st, 1918. See "Common Sense," August 3rd, 1918.
[2] "Nord-deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung," a semi-official organ, August 24th, 1918: "In Germany the Peace-by-Victory idea seems played out.

Kaiser. At Essen, on September 12th, he said that during the last few months the responsible leaders of the Imperial Government had repeatedly and unambiguously given it to be understood that they were at all times ready to offer the hand of peace. "But to make peace two are needed," and "we are confronted with the enemies' absolute will to destruction," and "their negation of the German people's right to existence."

The cry of Victory had returned to enliven the speeches of British statesmen. "Unless," said Mr. Lloyd George, at Manchester, on September 12th, "you have the image of Victory stamped on the peace terms, the coin will depreciate in value as time goes on." The Austrian peace proposal (September 16th) came at a time when the news from the front made it seem less and less worth while to pay any heed to what was going on outside the battlefield. The Austrian Note invited all the belligerents to take part in a completely non-binding discussion at a neutral centre. It "ventured to hope" that there would be "no objection on the part of any of the belligerents to such an exchange of views." The hope was too venturesome. Mr. Balfour replied to Austria in a speech at the Savoy Hotel to overseas Press representatives on September 17th. He defined the proposal as another "peace offensive," and said there was "no good" in it; it could do nothing but excite hope which it was impossible to realise, and brought us not a yard nearer that golden consummation to which we all passionately looked forward. Within half an hour of the reception of the Austrian Note at Washington, it was rejected.

Meanwhile, in Germany, discontent and distress were making enormous headway. A political crisis of the first magnitude was going on. The Government was trying to secure the co-operation of the Socialists, who stipulated, as conditions of their participation in office, the complete establishment of Parliamentary government and defined conditions

In the Allied countries it is only approaching the zenith of its influence." "The Vossische Zeitung," August 21st, said: "The world could have peace to-morrow if it only depended upon the goodwill of Germany."

of peace.[3] Well-authenticated reports (*Daily Telegraph* and *Daily News* Rottendam correspondents) declared that the German Government accepted these terms, but the Bulgarian collapse and the impending Austrian one made Count Hertling's position untenable, and on September 30th, the day on which Bulgaria surrendered unconditionally, he resigned. The Kaiser's decree[4] of that date foreshadowed the grant of parliamentary government, and on October 4, the new German Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, "supported by the consent of all the duly authorised persons in the Empire, and with the consent of all our Allies," sent a Note to President Wilson asking him to open peace negotiations on the basis of the Fourteen Points, and to conclude an armistice. His speech in the Reichstag, October 6th, announcing this step, announced also a "basic alteration" in the government. What had happened was not, he said, "something ephemeral." No Government could in future be formed which did not find its support in the Reichstag, and did not draw its leaders from it. He, moreover, claimed for himself, as Chancellor, supreme and other military authorities.

The reception of the offer in England did not differ from that accorded to previous peace overtures from Germany. With the exception of the *Manchester Guardian, Daily News,* and *Daily Telegraph,* the entire Press was, as usual, for refusal. "Unconditional surrender" was demanded, and the idea of negotiation was hooted. "We are not going to be foiled of our victory," said the *Times.* "We have reached a stage in the struggle when its appalling sacrifices are being plainly vindicated in the eyes of all the world. Nothing henceforth can make them useless except that very process for which the Germans are pleading, 'negotiations' conducted on a 'basis' which commits them to nothing, a camouflage democracy at

[3] A League of Nations based on disarmament, the restoration of Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro, Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest Treaties to be "no hindrance to peace," and autonomy for Alsace-Lorraine.

[4] "'I desire that the German people shall co-operate more effectively than hitherto in deciding the fate of the Fatherland. It is therefore my will that the men who are sustained by the people's trust shall in a wide extent co-operate in the rights and duties of government."

home and an armistice which would instantly equalise or reverse the military odds." For upwards of four years, said the *Times,* the Allies had persevered without a thought of concession, and they were not going to give in now. It was far too late in the day to talk of a "basis" for peace negotiations, The Allies' one resolve was to persevere to the end until Germany had surrendered unconditionally. There could be, it declared, no bargain with the Hun, and "the right answer" to Prince Max's Note was the news of continued military success at the front. (See the *Times* leaders, October 7th, 8th, 9th.)

American opinion was reported to be equally resolute. the *Times* Washington correspondent wrote: "The voice of America from the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate to Mr. Gompers, who is now on a visit to Rome, is unanimous in reiterating that there can be no parley with Germany."

A resolution to this effect was brought forward in the Senate, and in introducing it, the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee said that he hoped he had made it perfectly clear that the idea of an armistice was "absolutely abhorrent" to his Committee and, he believed, to every member of the Senate. Senator Lodge, leader of the Republican Party, was equally emphatic, and reminded his audience that there was only one course to pursue, i.e., to demand unconditional surrender, and then to put Germany behind bars. The expression "*Can* the Kaiser" had for some time been America's war slogan.

French opinion was not easily translatable, but a good many extracts were given in the *Morning Post.*

There was, of course, no official British comment, but Mr. Churchill, speaking at Glasgow (October 7th), said that we must be on our guard lest the results of our exertions should be brought to nought by Hun cajolery. The German proposals filled him with misgivings. However, he thought that Messrs. Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau would never be trapped.

President Wilson moved warily. Not for a moment did

he abandon his belief in "Force, force to the utmost, force without stint or limit." With zeal for Germany's constitutional reformation in one hand, and equal determination to maintain and forward the Allies' military and naval supremacy in the other, he advanced slowly, step by step, applauded by militarists and idealists alike. In his Notes, the two aims were so welded that it was impossible to distinguish the one from the other. The spectacle was a unique one. Never before, it seemed, had force and righteous purpose been so united. Mr. Wilson had joined the two together. Liberal and Conservative, Republican and Democrat, supporters of the "knock-out blow" and of a "lasting peace," vouchsafed on bent knees that they should never be put asunder.

The separate stages of that sublime union must be chronicled. The versions given by the respective friends and supporters of the happy pair differ a little. The *Times*, for instance, was exultant, ferocious, scornful, dwelling entirely upon the military situation and the victory of our arms; the *Manchester Guardian* was urbane, oracular, mindless of the passions that ruled the scene. The one side bade its victim surrender quickly or worse would follow; the other gently, but firmly, invited the enemy to come and be saved. While Sir E. Carson's call to the nation was "Finish the Job"—"The last half-mile," Mr. Asquith declared (see his speech at National Liberal Club, October 16th): "We feel on our brows as we wake the air of the morning, the breath from the springs of the East. . . . And at the end, the fast approaching end, of this long blood-stained road we have been compelled to tread, the world is moving to where, beyond these fratricidal conflicts, in a new and lasting fraternity, there is peace." The two versions should be studied alongside one another, but to avoid confusion we give the *Times* account of what happened during that fateful October first.[5]

[5] It is significant that in "The Times Review of the Year," issued as a supplement to The *Times* of January 1st, 1919, there is no mention of the negotiations between the Germans and President Wilson from October 4th onwards. The war is reported as ending with the "hopeless defeat" of Germany by the last great western offensive and her surrender on November 11th, "Armistice Day."

Prince Max's Note reached the President on October 8th. Early that day, it was reported, Mr. Wilson cancelled his usual morning recreation hour and remained secluded in his study at work. His answer was sent at once. He asked what was the exact meaning of the German Note? Did the German Government accept the Fourteen Points outright so that the only object of discussion would be to agree upon the practical details of their application, and on whose behalf was the Chancellor speaking in making the appeal? With regard to an armistice, he said that he could not make any proposal for one to the Allies unless the Central Powers consented "immediately to withdraw their forces everywhere from invaded territory."

"President Wilson's answer is eminently satisfactory," said the *Times*. "It eliminates all idea of an armistice as a preliminary to discussion of any kind, and it does not even assure an armistice to Germany in the event of her evacuation of all invaded territory. Evacuation is the first but certainly not the only condition that would have to be fulfilled before any consideration of an armistice became possible." The next day its columns were devoted to the capture of Le Cateau, A Triumph of British Arms; In Pursuit; Wide Area Freed, being some of the headlines.

On October 12th, the German Government answered Mr. Wilson's questions. It accepted the Fourteen Points outright, and said that the Chancellor spoke in the name of the German Government and the German people. It declared itself willing to comply with the President's proposal in regard to evacuation of invaded territory, and suggested that a mixed Commission should be appointed to arrange for the evacuation. "For casuistry of this kind," said the *Times*, "frankness is the only cure. The German people should know at once that the associated Governments have not the slightest intention of accepting 'mixed Commissions' to make 'arrangements' concerning the evacuation. An armistice is within their reach on conditions analogous to those which were accepted by Bulgaria. The lesson is plain. The sword must decide. There is no other road to peace." "A mixed Commission," said the

French *Temps,* "in which the vanquished invader would speak to us as an equal! Nothing of the kind. A Loophole of Escape which we shall not for a moment allow."

"I can state with complete confidence," wrote the *Times* Paris correspondent, "that France intends to pursue her work—a work, not of frenzied jingo vengeance, but one of pure justice—and views with distrust the peculiar negotiations into which President Wilson has been drawn. . . . The French and British armies are proving on a grand scale that Germany is beaten and the French do not intend to let Germany win the peace after they have lost the war. . . . France, with her Allies, is victorious, and France means to obtain the proper fruits of victory." "What does it matter to martyred and violated France," cried the *Matin,* "if William makes way for another Prince, if one Chancellor succeeds another? . . . What does all this play-acting mean to us who demand vengeance for our dead? The sacrifice of our heroes would be vain if, in the full tide of victory, we were to place our hand in the hand of the torturer at the very moment when the joy of the chastisement we can administer floods our hearts and lifts up our thoughts." In the *Times* (October 14th), Lord Wrenbury, Sir E. Hume Williams, Mr. G. W. Prothero, Sir H. Morris, Mr. Spencer Wilkinson, Mr. Frederic Harrison, and Lord Denbigh, several of them octogenarians, said more or less the same thing. "Let Hindenburg and Ludendorff publicly surrender their swords and the Allies occupy Berlin and Vienna," wrote Lord Wrenbury, aged 73. "Until that is conceded, fight on." "Why in the name of commonsense should we stay our hand at the very moment of victory?" asked Sir E. Hume Williams. "The very soul of Germany is stained with guilt; her atrocities cry aloud for vengeance. . . . *Væ victis!*" "The German proposal of an armistice is a monumental insult added to the myriad of injuries to the Allies and to humanity," said Sir H. Morris (76). Mr. Frederic Harrison (87) wanted the Allies to occupy Berlin, Cologne, Essen, Hamburg, the Kiel Canal, Buda Pest, Trieste, Constantinople, and the Bosphorus preliminarily to passing judgment. "Why all this 'slop' about the German

people'' said Lord Denbigh. ''Why differentiate between the system and the people whose system it was?'' ''There can be but one maxim,'' declared Mr. Churchill, at Manchester, ''Full steam ahead!'' Mr. Wilson replied again (October 14th). He told Germany that it must be clearly understood that the terms of the armistice must be left to the generals in the field, and that they must be such as would maintain the existing military supremacy of the Allies. After warning the German Government to desist from ''illegal and inhuman practices which they still persist in,'' he called their attention to his doctrine of the necessity of destroying arbitrary power, such as existed in Germany. According to the New York correspondent of the *Times*, this Note was received throughout America with ''shouts of approval.'' Even Senator Lodge was ''genuinely pleased'' with the President. ''Unconditional surrender'' was said to be on the lips of everyone, and Mr. Gerard published his opinion that St. Helena was far too good for the Kaiser. The universal satisfaction was deepened by the announcement made at the same time as the publication of the Note that the shipment of American soldiers to the front was continuing, and would continue with unabated speed. The Fourth Liberty Loan was also mounting by leaps and bounds, and the remark was frequently overheard: ''We've only just begun to fight.''

The following days were chronicled by the *Times* as days of deliverance. The Allies marched into Lille and Ostend. Stories of German infamies in liberated France and Belgium occupied many columns of the newspapers and the great march eastward was proclaimed. The German Note of October 20th, asseverating the genuineness of constitutional reform, protesting against charges of inhumanity, was dismissed as ''mendacious effrontery'' by the *Times*, ''a mere piece of manœuvring''—and President Wilson's Last Word (October 23rd) informing Germany that he had transmitted its request for an armistice to the Allies on the understanding that it should be one which should leave the United States and the Allies in a position to enforce any arrangement that might be entered into and make a renewal of hostilities

on the part of Germany impossible, had an excellent reception, both here, in America, and on the Continent. The President repeated his demand for the overthrow of Germany's military and monarchical system. The nations of the world, he said, do not and cannot trust the word of those who have hitherto been the masters of German policy. Therefore, if the Government of the United States had to deal with them now or were likely to have to deal with them later "it must demand not peace negotiations, but surrender."

It was significant as the *Times* Washington correspondent pointed out, that simultaneously with the publication of this Note, the White House gave out copies of letters which passed between the President and the Secretary for War, Mr. Baker, in which Mr. Baker announced that there were now over 2,000,000 American soldiers in France, and the President congratulated him upon his "steady accomplishment in the all-important application of force to the liberation of the world." It was also remarked that on the eve of the Note Mr. Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, ostentatiously published his estimates for nearly £200,000,000 and told the country that he was going to ask Congress to authorise the inauguration in 1919 of another three years' building programme of ten dreadnoughts, six battle cruisers, and 140 smaller vessels. The War Industries Board also put out a statement accentuating the impetus which the war preparations were assuming. The New York correspondent wrote:

"I was present last night at a typical scene of enthusiasm for victory without compromise. At the Lotos Club the members of the British University Mission were being entertained at dinner, when suddenly the chairman, Mr. Frank Lawrence, rose and announced that he had just received the intelligence that President Wilson had demanded the complete surrender of Germany.

"With one accord the great assembly of distinguished men sprang to their feet, shouting, 'That's the idea,' 'That's what we have been waiting for.' 'Good for the President.' There was an explosion of mighty cheers for the President repeated over and over again, and followed by cheers for

our Allies. When the tumult had subsided Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, rose and said:—

"'The word "surrender" is the one word the Germans believed America and her Allies lacked the courage to pronounce. I am one of those who believe that the use of this term will hasten victory and end this war; and now that it has been said I make the prophecy that their military and political structure will crumble with surprising speed.'"

The prophecy was a correct one. The attempt made by moderate opinion in Germany to rally the country against the demand for unconditional surrender broke down. The people, exhausted, starving, and disillusioned, demanded peace at any price. Belief in Mr. Wilson and in the Allies' good intentions, which had been sedulously fostered by our official propagandists (see "The Secrets of Crewe House") was strong.

Austria and Turkey capitulated. The Austrian Empire broke up into fragments and revolutions took place in all the capitals. The Armistice terms imposed upon Austria (November 5th) were all, said the *Times*, that the most exacting opinion could desire. "They leave her disarmed and helpless, and place her territory, her communications and many of her resources at our disposal for the prosecution of the war against her late ally. They may be assumed to foreshadow the nature of the terms on which the Allies will grant an armistice to Germany when that Power makes up her mind to sue for one."

The German revolt spread. The Red Flag was hoisted at Kiel, Hamburg, and other towns. Soldiers' Councils were proclaimed. Berlin telegrams announced that German delegates had started for the Western Front (November 6th) with the object of obtaining an armistice. Simultaneously there came from Washington a Note from President Wilson stating that the Allies had declared their willingness to make peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points, with a reservation on the question of the Freedom of the Seas and on the understanding, with which Mr. Wilson agreed, that compensation should

be paid by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air. The Note further stated that Marshal Foch had been authorised to communicate the terms of the armistice.

"Apply to Foch!" The curt order made a fine headline for the newspapers. But there were finer headlines to come. "Revolution in Germany; Abdication and Flight of the Kaiser; British Troops at Mons." The Guildhall banquet on the night of November 9th was an eloquent affair. Four years before, at the first Guildhall banquet of the war, Mr. Asquith had made the historic declaration that we should never sheathe the sword until the military domination of Prussia had been wholly and finally destroyed. On this historic occasion Mr. Lloyd George was able to say "in a spirit of thankfulness rather than of exultation, that the issue was settled." "Germany, left headless by the abdication of the Kaiser, and helpless with an army that was hardly an army, and a navy that was no longer a navy, was faced with immediate surrender or a worse fate." (The *Times*.) "She has no other choice," said the Prime Minister, in words that thrilled his great audience by their simplicity. "Her doom is sealed."

The "spirit of thankfulness, rather than of exultation," was very marked among the Liberals. There was a strain of wonder in their joy. Their faith in the sword as an instrument of light had been rewarded. It had cost them something to profess and maintain this faith; at no time during the war had they been quite without misgivings; now at last all doubts were dispelled. There was something almost supernatural in the achievement—the Kaiser had vanished. Prussian militarism had been overthrown, their dreams had actually come true. And it was all due to President Wilson who had shown himself capable of handling that supremely dangerous weapon the sword without thereby being defiled. Liberals watched the negotiations proceeding between him and the Germans with an admiration that at times became ecstatic, so skilful were his moves, so unerring was his high resolve. What a man and what an opportunity! "Surely," wrote the

Manchester Guardian, on October 16th, surveying his answer to the second German Note, "no man has ever occupied quite so tremendous a position as negotiator and arbiter of the world's affairs. His word is the word of a hundred million people, and no one of the hundred million dare dispute its legitimacy and binding force. Such is the mighty prerogative reserved by the constitution of the United States for their elected head. Of course, the Allies have been consulted . . . but the voice is his voice, the decisions are primarily his decisions. They breathe his spirit, they reflect at once his keen perception, his candour, and his high resolve. They are worthy, let it be said, of a great man on one of the very greatest of occasions. To our mind they meet in every way, alike in what they say and in the way of saying it, the needs of a momentous hour. There was need of such a man, and it will be to the lasting glory of America and of American institutions to have produced and placed him in power. There is no other in all the world enjoying a like directing power—the Kaiser in the height of his glory was but a shadow and simulacrum of royalty beside him. . . ."

The second German Note was the one which had so exasperated the *Times* with its suggestion of a mixed Commission to make arrangements for the evacuation of territory, that it had commented, "For casuistry of this kind there is but one cure—the sword." President Wilson's answer was less outspoken. He did not, in so many words, refuse to treat with Germany. "Many violent and unwise persons," said the *Guardian,* "have clamoured for such a refusal, and vowed that nothing could meet the occasion short of a demand for unconditional surrender. The President demands nothing of the sort. It is good enough for him to get what he wants, to make absolutely sure of getting it, and to get it quickly if he can, but at any rate to get it. Here we see the beauty of a simple handling of a great question. Of course, it may be said that to get what you want, and to make sure of getting it, is, in fact, to impose unconditional surrender. *It is not; it is a quite different, much speedier and much surer way of accomplishing the same object.*"

Admiring, marvelling, awestruck, the *Guardian* watched the President on his priest-like task. It was completely fascinated by his unusual way of accomplishing the same object as that which many violent and unwise people demanded. Like many an idealist, unwilling to admit that what he does not value can be important, it dismissed as insignificant the clamour of the "fire-eaters" around it. It attributed a good deal of the clamour to "war psychology—a curious phase—not altogether easy to explain, still less to justify." (Leading Article, October 24th.) It thought that a great deal of this feeling, "no doubt artificial," was "pumped up in the minds of the multitude by the lurid incitements of a somewhat irresponsible press." It did not occur to it to consider that "war psychology," however difficult to explain or to justify, is the main obstacle to peace, and that its "artificiality" is no protection against the power of its press-artificers. It felt no "irrational promptings" itself, it was sure that its own cool-headed views were the views "of the vast majority of reasonable people." The German people, it was confident, had nothing to lose and everything to gain in submitting to the President's decrees. "A peace of justice is the word of hope which President Wilson has breathed into the soul of the German people, and his promise shines like a beacon beckoning them on. . . . The war may have brought to Germany final defeat and terrible losses, but it will have brought her also an inestimable gain. It will have given her liberty. Let there be no doubt about that. Nothing now can stop the forward march of the German people. The days of their political servitude are over, at least in the sense that they have now only to stretch out a hand in order to grasp the boon which has so long eluded them."

There was one rift in the lute. The Allies did not, until the last moment, adopt the Wilson policy. The *Manchester Guardian* did not much worry about it, but the *Daily News* did. It had been worrying, on and off, throughout the year, though during August and September the Allied victories had acted as a sedative. However, in October, with peace in the air, it began to worry again, and, despite the

glorious days through which it was moving, it was not until the last moment quite serene. In contrast with the *Manchester Guardian,* the *Daily News* was devout, distracted and voluble; sitting on thorns all the time because the Allies had not declared their war aims and alternately capering in anguish and joy. It could not conceal its agitation, it sang hymns one day and wrung its hands the next. Upon the receipt of Prince Max's appeal for peace it wrote: "It is unfortunate that this critical moment finds the Allies without an agreed and declared policy. . . . The action of Germany makes an immediate decision on the matter imperative. We can no longer live in the atmosphere of vague phrases. We must say whether President Wilson speaks for us or for himself alone. We cannot doubt what the decision will be. There is no policy before the world except that of the President, and there is no other policy that would be tolerated by the democracy of any Allied country. Its immediate endorsement is vital." "We wish a formal declaration of aims by Great Britain, France and Italy existed to place this matter outside the range of doubt," it continued, on October 14th. "We do not think there can be any practical doubt. The Wilson policy has been before the world for nearly two years. This policy has had *the endorsement of silence* from the spokesmen of the Allies."

On October 19th A.G.G. wrote:—

"All thoughts and feelings to-day are submerged in an emotion of gratitude that has not yet found utterance. The transition from the darkest hour of peril to this miraculous dawn has been too sudden and blinding for our eyes. We are living in a world that seems too good to be true. If we talk very loud the enchantment may vanish and we may find ourselves back in the midst of the grim realities that have companioned us for four years. It is well that we should taste our cup of joy with caution. . . .

"What is the task of the Allies? There has never been a moment when statesmanship had a heavier responsibility. Yet there never was a moment when the mind of statesmanship on this side of the Atlantic was more obscure, or when

the currents of public feeling were more destitute of direction. What is the guarantee we must give that will on the one side prevent the collapse into Bolshevism, and on the other consummate the fall of Kaiserism. The question brings us to the heart of the conflict behind the veil of mystery. If the German nation is to be helped to kill Kaiserism on the one hand and avert anarchy on the other it must be offered terms which are just and will offer it a prospect of existence. Has it got that offer? No one can say. The Governments are silent and the French press and the English press are charged with sinister suggestions to the contrary. The secret treaties have not been repudiated and the Paris resolutions stand."

"Month after month," the old plaint went on (October 21st) "it has been urged in these columns that the Allies should make as clear and specific a statement of war aims as was made by President Wilson in his famous fourteen points. The demand has been fruitless. The suggestion that there was any obscurity as to the Allies' aims has been scouted as little less than treasonable" (by none more than by the *Daily News* itself).

"We must repeat the warning we have uttered several times of late," it wrote, October 22nd. "The warning is all the more necessary in view of certain mischievous tendencies in a notorious section of the Press.[6] The Press to which we refer is deliberately playing the German game in its hints that the European Allies have a policy of their own. . . . The Government must check this mischief before it goes any further." (As if it had only just begun!)

The mischief was not checked. President Wilson's last word was uttered. Germany must place herself irrevocably in the hands of the Allies. "That is undeniably a stern demand"—said the *Daily News,* October 25th,—"but in agreeing to it the German people are exposing themselves to no unknown and exorbitant demand by the Allies."

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[6] The *Daily News* like the *Manchester Guardian,* could not bring itself to admit that the danger was more than "certain mischievous tendencies." It would have been more correct to refer to Liberal opinion as "certain amiable tendencies."

"The terms of the armistice will be dictated by the Allies," it wrote, October 29th. What those terms were to be, it said, was being settled at this time in Paris. They were not being settled by Marshal Foch as some of the reactionary papers in this country supposed. Oh, no. The terms would be fixed by the *civil* heads of the Allied nations. It could not be otherwise because we were on the eve of victory in a war for the destruction of Prussian militarism. And the armistice terms would demand, it added, only guarantees which were necessary and sane, not guarantees which were deliberately intended to make peace impossible, and the continuance of the war certain. (This was because the *Daily News* had been warned by General Maurice, its correspondent, that it was by no means clear that Germany was at her last gasp.) It talked about the "incendiary hand" of Lord Northcliffe, who was being wicked enough to declare that "the armistice must be sought from Foch and Beatty." "Yet this man who imperils grave situations with irresponsible sensationalism is a member of the Government, the member of the Government above all things charged with propaganda in enemy countries." What a betrayal of trust! it exclaimed.

The disintegration of Germany proceeded apace. The *Daily News* forgot its objections to the imposition of armistice terms by Foch and Beatty. The Allies' endorsement of thirteen of the Fourteen Points relieved its anxiety. Besides, it was evident that Germany was in no position to continue the struggle. The news of spreading revolution in Germany was alarming. With the example of Russia before its eyes, anxiety could not but mingle with the satisfaction with which it viewed the long awaited spectacle of democracy dominant in Germany. It did not disappoint its readers by neglecting to expatiate on the fall of the Kaiser (see leader, "The Dawn," November 11th), but its main eloquence was reserved for graver issues. The pace at which events were moving was disquieting. The old order had gone into the pit rather more suddenly than the *Daily News* anticipated it would go there. The social order was giving way, and A.G.G. mused nervously about it. If we were not careful the revolu-

tion might reach English shores. The image of a prairie fire suggested itself. "No one who knows the temper of mind among large sections of the working classes in this country needs to be told how dry the heather is. No one in his senses wants the heather to catch fire." Prairie fires on the Continent were one thing—but in England—Heaven preserve us. "It would defeat the great constructive task before us. . . . This country more than any other has saved Europe from despotism; this country more than any other can save Europe from anarchy." So it was waste of time to exult over the fall of the Kaiser—there were far more important things to think about. "It's odd how little it seems to matter, somehow," wrote the individual who sparkled daily "Under the Clock."[7] "History is moving too fast, like a bad cinematograph. The wearied age and brain cannot keep pace. 'He's gone,' I said to a 'busman just after the news was announced. 'Oh! he's gone, has he!' said the 'busman indifferently, and began to do sums on that thing they carry for checking the fares."

The last shot was fired. The last man of the millions that had been sacrificed in the struggle had fallen. The armistice was signed. The world was at peace. "This is no time for words," said the Prime Minister in a voice broken with emotion after he had read the terms of the armistice to the House of Commons on Monday, November 11th, "our hearts are too full of gratitude, to which no tongue can give adequate expression." And the House straightway proceeded to give humble and reverent thanks to Almighty God. The service was simple and moving—an hour of prayer and thanksgiving. The Archbishop of Canterbury read the lesson from Isaiah (chapter LXI). Two verses of it, said the *Times*, moved the congregation profoundly.

"He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty for the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

"They shall raise up the former desolation, and they shall repair the waste cities."

[7] "Under the Clock," November 10th, reported King George's views re the Kaiser. "The King's feelings and expressions are so strong that they can scarcely be produced verbatim."

12

THE ARMISTICE

THE *terms* of the Armistice were rigorous. The *Times* described them as "unquestionably adequate." No loophole was left for Germany to resume the war. The immediate evacuation of the invaded territories was demanded, as also the whole left bank of the Rhine. The Rhineland was to be occupied by Allied and United States armies, holding the principal crossings of the Rhine—Mainz, Coblenz, and Cologne, together with the bridge-heads. The enemy was to surrender "in good condition" 5,000 guns, 30,000 machine guns, 2,000 aeroplanes, and a large number of trench mortars, as well as to deliver, intact, all military establishments within the evacuated territories, and all military stores and food.

The cession of 5,000 locomotives, 150,000 railway wagons, and 5,000 motor-lorries was also demanded, and all stores of coal were to be left, and repair shops were to be kept in a state of efficiency during the whole period of the Armistice. Germany was to pay the cost of the Allied occupation of the Rhine provinces.

The naval clauses were even more drastic than the military ones.

All submarines and naval aircraft were to be handed over, and all surface-water ships were to be interned and disarmed under Allied supervision. In the event of ships not being handed over the Allies were to occupy Heligoland. All German merchant ships found at sea were to be liable to capture.

Freedom of access to and from the Baltic was to be given to the Allied navies. The Allies were empowered to occupy all ports, batteries, and other fortifications at the entrance. All Black Sea ports were to be evacuated, and all Russian

warships and other material seized by Germany to be handed over. The treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest were to be abandoned.

Finally, the blockade was to continue, but the clause (No. 26) relating to this stated: "The Allies and the United States contemplate the provisioning of Germany during the armistice as shall be found necessary."

No party in England disputed the rigour of the naval and military terms of the Armistice. The Tories were triumphant; the Liberals were fascinated by the moral significance of such complete victory. The drastic terms meant for them the end not only of war with Germany, but of war itself. The defenceless condition to which Germany was reduced under the armistice was but a symbol of the universal disarmament that was coming with the peace. The *Nation* (November 16th) wrote: "At last the blessed hour has struck which restores life and light to the earth. . . . The gigantic sin of war, plenteously purged by the blood of innocence, is no more. For some hours now, man has ceased to slay his brother; for some hours he has almost ceased to hate him. *There is no longer a foe to be dreaded and destroyed; there is only a human being to be succoured and fed.* . . . At last it is clear that peace can not only be re-established, but if man wills, and wills strong enough, need never be broken again. . . . At last we have found the cure for war. Call it what you will—militarism, imperialism—the 'great Power' idea is destroyed. Of the three military Empires which made the war—Germany, Russia, Austria—not one is left. There need be no more 'Allies,' for in the old European sense there are no more 'enemies.' Two great federations of men, exercising world-power, do indeed remain—England and America. The latter never was, and never will be, a militarist Power. The first, essentially free in its institutions and in the character of its people, must either quit what remains of its imperialism, or perish. Under the armistice we deprive Germany of the power to resume the war. If we treat her justly at the peace she will not complain. But when the final accounts are made up between the nations, disarmament for one must

mean disarmament for all. Europe has not rid herself of the Empires of the Eagle in order to put itself under ward to the British Lion. The world is a totally changed place from the international society of 1914. It is, we believe, dedicated henceforth to the pursuit of peace."

The *Daily News* was equally idealistic. A.G.G. chose as his text Mr. Asquith's words at the Lord Mayor's banquet, November 9th, 1914, "We shall not sheathe the sword."

"To-day the sword is sheathed. The war is finished, and peace reigns once more on the earth." (We were still fighting in Russia.) "Prussian militarism is destroyed. Despotism is dead, not in Germany alone, but throughout Europe." Of course, Mr. Gardiner pointed out, there was a darker side to the picture, "ruin and desolation that are the legacy of war, a continent in revolution, world-wide bankruptcy, famine and all the phenomena of a civilisation wrecked by an earthquake." But for one brief moment it was enough to be GLAD. . . . Never had the world so vast a theme for rejoicing. But never, too, was there an occasion when rejoicing was so mixed with deeper thoughts. "How can we sum up the mighty thoughts that closed yesterday when Marshal Foch received the submission of the defeated enemy. What are the main outlines that emerge from the welter of memories?" The main outline that A.G.G. saw, and he was not far wrong, was naturally the shadow of the British Navy. "The enemy were slowly starved; starved of food, of raiment, of wool, rubber, petrol, leather, cotton, of the necessaries of war . . . the shadow of the power of the British Navy deepened over the land." That was why, he said exultantly, Germany was defeated, and it was a conclusion which gave him immense satisfaction to contemplate, because it showed so evidently that we were not a *militaristic* Power. Throughout the war, he and other Liberals had rejoiced in, and eulogised the British Navy, this wonderful and essentially defensive weapon of ours, which could not be charged with militarist aims and yet worked better even than militarism. Mr. Lloyd George adopted this view in his speech at Bristol on December 11th,

1918. "We had no machinery for an offensive war. (A voice: 'What about the Navy?') Ah," continued Mr. Lloyd George, "you cannot take the Navy to Berlin (laughter and cheers), and that is the whole difference. . . . And, therefore, the Navy is a defensive weapon, and not an offensive one. (Cheers.) And that is why we do not mean to give it up." (Loud cheers.)

We did not give up the blockade at the armistice. It was no doubt maintained for defensive purposes; though, as Germany had been rendered defenceless and "the world was at peace," it was a little difficult to justify this argument. The *Nation* alone protested, though not vigorously. "The maintenance of the blockade seems an unnecessary hardship in view of the strictness of the other conditions." It protested also against the demand for the cession of 5,000 locomotives and 5,000 motor-lorries. "Germany is almost starving," it said, "and in the throes of revolution. If we suddenly cut down her transport the delicate machinery of internal supply may give way quickly, and we assume a dreadful responsibility. It is somewhat relieved by a promise to provision the country."

A great deal was made of this promise by all sections of the Press in this country. The *Times* referred to it with complacency.

"The Allies knew," it said on November 13th, "when they signed the armistice that their enemies are threatened with starvation. . . . They did not wait for Dr. Solf's appeal to decide upon their action." (Dr. Solf, the German Foreign Secretary, had implored Mr. Wilson to hasten the peace negotiations, "as there is pressing danger of famine.") "The Supreme Council at Versailles unanimously resolved that all possible efforts should be made to supply the peoples of the Central Powers with food, consistent with the claims of their own countrymen. That step is a very practical illustration of their humanity and of their intentions; but it is not less evidence of their sagacity and of their provident care for Europe as a whole. 'Hunger does not heed reforms,' the President reminded Congress. 'It heeds madness and all the ugly

distempers that make an ordered life impossible.' Germany is hungry, and Germany is in a state of revolution. The combination is highly perilous. . . . The Allies will strive to lessen the danger by feeding the Germans. . . . Common sense and humanity go hand in hand in indicating this obligation to the Allies and in bringing home to them its extreme urgency. This is no question of showing sympathy with the Huns. . . . It is a duty which we owe both to our character and to our own plain interests."

The *Manchester Guardian* (November 13th) wrote:—

"Germany in her distress and sore travail petitions earnestly for two things—for food and for an early peace. She declares herself—and the same thing is even more true of Austria—in desperate straits, with the spectre of famine hanging over her, and, in the political no less than the material sphere, it is plain to all men that she is hard pressed. In both we must do our best to come to her assistance. The cry of distress uttered by Dr. Solf in regard to the conditions of the armistice was probably based on a hasty or partial reading. There is reason to believe that the clause promising on behalf of the Allies that they would undertake the provisioning of Germany, although as a matter of fact this has all along been contemplated, was not in the first draft of the armistice conditions, but was one of those modifications inserted at the conference of delegates in Marshal Foch's railway saloon. In any case, there is no note of bitterness in the report which reaches us of this final conference, which appears to have been carried on in a friendly and conciliatory spirit. The need of Germany is acknowledged alike by M. Clemenceau and by Mr. Wilson. Germany, in fact, has resisted almost to the last extremity, and policy and humanity alike dictate that no catastrophe shall be allowed to overwhelm her. As her merchant ships are still to be banished from the sea till peace is signed and she will have no access to the markets of the world, it is manifest that something must be done for her relief during the interval. The obligation is admitted, and we may be very sure that, under joint British and American

direction, it will be fully discharged. There is, indeed, something like a world-shortage of food, but with the disappearance of the submarine and the release, which presumably will take place, of German tonnage for Allied use the difficulties of transport will be considerably diminished. Germany cannot, indeed, be given more than the general need will permit, and the need will be bitter in many other European countries, but she will not be allowed to starve or suffer any acute shortage; and the shortage of transport which she dreads through the surrender of much of her rolling-stock—which, by the way, M. Clemenceau claims as merely the return of what she has in one way or another taken from the Allies—will not be allowed to stand in the way. Here is a signal example of international co-operation. The food resources of the world are virtually to be pooled and distributed justly, according to need. It is a great example, a first step in the process destined to go so much farther."

The Germans, however, found it difficult to subsist on promises. They clamoured in what appeared to us a most unseemly way for immediate relief. Dr. Solf sent appeals to Mr. Wilson, to all the Allied Governments, to the Pope. Prince Lichnowsky wrote a personal letter to Mr. Asquith; the President of the German Women's Suffrage Association asked Mrs. Fawcett to intercede on behalf of "millions of German women and children who will starve if the blockade is maintained." These appeals pointed out that on account of the condition of rolling-stock in Germany the delivering up of 5,000 locomotives and 150,000 railway wagons made it impossible to ensure even the most restricted supplies of food, coal, etc., for the towns. "Still more important," Dr. Solf's appeal to the Allied Governments concluded, "is the complete paralysation of the North and Baltic sea fisheries by the continuance of the blockade." But nothing happened to illustrate the spirit of the verses in Isaiah which had made such a profound impression upon the Commons at their Thanksgiving Service. Mr. Wilson repeated his assurances that food would be forthcoming. Mr. Hoover, it was stated, was on the point of leaving America for the purpose of dealing with

the problem; and the British Press reposed comfortably upon these assurances, as also did those eminent individuals to whom personal appeals had been addressed. Mr. Asquith was reported to have commented as follows: "If I had to make a reply to Prince Lichnowsky's letter, or any similar appeal, I should say that the terms of the armistice did not in my judgment in the least exceed the just necessities of the case. Germany has brought them upon herself."

Mrs. Fawcett published her reply to the German women's appeal in the *Times* (December 2nd, 1918). Echoes from a Venetian Court of Justice come while we read it.

> "The quality of mercy is not strained,
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
> 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
> The thronéd monarch better than his crown;
> His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
> The attribute to awe and majesty,
> Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
> But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
> It is enthronéd in the hearts of kings;
> It is an attribute to God himself;
> And earthly power doth then show likest God's
> When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
> Though justice be thy plea, consider this . . ."

Hush! What has this got to do with the Germans? We are not in Venice! We are in London! This is the twentieth century. It is not Portia who is speaking, but Mrs. Fawcett. Listen to her.

"I regret I do not see my way to make any appeal to our Government and its Allies to raise the blockade on Germany during the armistice."

[The *Times:* "O, noble judge! O, excellent old woman!"]

"It must be remembered that there is a food shortage all over the world. . . . This shortage was aggravated by the

unrestricted submarine campaign of your own Government, without, so far as I have been able to learn, any remonstrance whatever from German men or women.

[The *Times:* "A Daniel come to judgment! Yea, a Daniel! O, wise old judge, how I do honour thee!"]

"The policy of the Allied Food Council is thus explained in our Press: 'First, before any relief can be granted, the Council must be assured that the need is real; next, it must also be assured of the existence of an internal organisation able and willing to ensure a fair distribution among all classes, to prevent, for instance, hoarding by the rich, with consequent further privation for the poor.' "

[The *Times:* "Most rightful Judge!"]

"The people of this country are not vindictive, but they have a strong sense of justice. . . .

"Mr. Hoover, the American food expert . . . has published his opinion that Germany has a large proportion of this autumn's harvest still in hand. . . ."

[The *Times:* "Here it is, most reverend doctor, here it is."]

"I am afraid you will feel this letter to be very hard and cold, but it is necessary to face the facts.

"I trust with all my heart that German men and women will overthrow the autocrats who have so long oppressed them, and that the future peace of the world may be built on a surer foundation than ever before."

[The *Times:* "A sentence! Come prepare!"]

"From inbred arrogance, or out of a stupid hope that they can 'bluff' their adversaries," wrote the *Times* in a leading article, "Abolish the Blockade?" on November 28th, "the Germans are assuming, or affecting, an attitude which wholly ignores the fundamental facts of the situation. They must remember that, as an army and as a people, they have been thoroughly and hopelessly defeated, that they have had to sue for an armistice and for peace, and that they must accept—and carry out—the terms dictated to them. The absurd story which they are reported to have circulated semi-officially, that the Entente will probably consider the aboli-

tion of the blockade 'as the result of Mr. Wilson's initiative . . .' is, we need hardly say, utterly unfounded.

"The Allies have not the slightest intention of throwing aside their chief weapon for ensuring the signature of a just peace."

The *Manchester Guardian* agreed with the *Times* and Mrs. Fawcett. It wrote on November 23rd:—

"The terms of the armistice were severe, but were they needlessly severe? Above all, do they involve any inhumanity?

"Complaints pour in, not all of them very dignified complaints, and some of them apparently based on imperfect information. . . . The maintenance of the blockade, coupled with the surrender of railway wagons and engines, need not, and will not, provoke starvation. The Germans have in hand the bulk of the harvest. They ought to be able to sustain themselves without difficulty for a good many months, and the Allies are pledged to provision Germany as necessity arises."

It wrote, a week later (November 29th):—

"There is much confused thought and needless recrimination on the subject of the feeding of the peoples of the Central Powers. For most of this, the new German Government is itself responsible. The armistice terms . . . made express provision for meeting the needs of the people of Germany and Austria. Despite this, Dr. Solf entered at once upon a campaign of hysterical appeal to President Wilson—as though he only among the leaders of the Allies were blest with the bowels of compassion—and, later, to the Pope, in which he begged for immediate intervention 'to prevent the German people from perishing of starvation and anarchy,' and called upon the American nation 'to save thousands of women and children from death by starvation.' The manner of these appeals was not tactful.

". . . It is recalled that German agriculture has been fostered in the years before the war with a success that put a million and a half additional workers on the land in a decade; that in 1914 ten millions of her population were so engaged; and that she was then able to produce 90 per

cent. of her essential foodstuffs within her own borders. It is true that her 1916 harvest suffered heavily for lack of nitrates, but it is also true that German ingenuity had overcome that difficulty, and that Germany before the war ended was producing nitrates on a scale that made her largely independent of importation. The 1917 harvest was good, the 1918 harvest better. The German Government is, moreover, no longer under the necessity of using a large proportion of the potato crop for the manufacture of spirit for war purposes. To contend that a population with these resources, and now only three months past the harvest, is in immediate danger of starvation, or is, indeed, in distress much geater than that of the newly liberated lands, or even of some of the neutrals, such as Finland and Holland, carries no conviction, and obscures the legitimate claims the German people have on Allied assistance."

The blockade was not raised. Nor was any step to provision Germany taken by the Allies until four months later, when General Plumer, commanding the Second Army in Cologne, drew the Allied statesmen's attention to the starvation existing in Germany, and pointed out, in a telegram to Mr. Lloyd George, "how bad was the effect produced upon the British army by the spectacle of the sufferings of German women and children." Then, and not until then, March 14th, 1919, (Brussels Agreement), did the Allied Council, in fear of army demoralisation, agree to supply Germany with 300,000 tons of breadstuffs and 70,000 tons of fats per month until September on condition that the greater part of Germany's mercantile marine should be handed over to them for transport work. The blockade, however, continued for four months longer, and the stoppage of German industries, due to the refusal of all importations of raw materials, was in no way relieved until after the signature of the Peace Treaty.

The subject must be returned to in a later chapter. During the autumn of 1918, it was not taken seriously by the Press of this country except for occasional warnings in the Liberal newspapers. The pictures of a starving and

disease-ridden Germany, which had been useful in wartime to encourage belief in the enemy's imminent collapse,[1] were no longer needed. The Allies' pledge to provision Germany satisfied all but a few humanitarian individuals, and, as the

[1] See, for instance, an article by Mr. F. W. Wile (a prominent Northcliffe journalist) in the *Weekly Despatch*, of Sunday, September 10th, 1918. Under the title, "The Huns of 1940," he wrote on the effects of the blockade in Germany, as follows (the bold type is his own):—

"THE REAL EFFECTS OF THE BLOCKADE OF GERMANY ARE STILL TO BE EXPERIENCED BY THAT CRIMINAL NATION. By that I mean that the under-nourishment which it has suffered for the past four years, and is still suffering, will manifest itself in the years to come on even a more terrible scale than anything thus far undergone.

"What is the effect on the German civilian population of the practically complete stoppage of imported foodstuffs and of the reduction of home-grown foodstuffs (principally meat and fats) owing to lack of foreign fodder? The effect has been that diseases of the most virulent and devastating character are rampant from one end of the country to the other. GERMANY IS TO-DAY A LAND OF PLAGUE. The white scourge, tuberculosis, is epidemic. Hunger-typhus is raging in numerous districts. Dysentery claims hundreds of victims. Diseases of the skin (due to lack of soap and shaving materials) prevail on an alarming scale. Infectious maladies like diphtheria, scarlet fever, and typhoid of various types are seriously destructive of child-life. Shortage of milk has produced calamitous conditions among young mothers, infants, and invalids.

"In Berlin, in June, no milk at all could be obtained even when the applicant possessed a doctor's certificate. Only children under two years of age were allowed milk, and older children were suffering terribly from the want of it. The intervening three months have brought no relief. The famine in fats not only continued but grows worse. The Germans have one meatless week a month now, and even vegetarians will admit, I suppose, that the cumulative effect of such restrictions on a race of meat-eaters is bound to be deleterious.

"The Germans made much capital during the war of the fact—incongruous on its face—that their birth-rate actually increased on the average, since 1914. Whether the situation in that respect is as favourable to-day as at earlier periods of the war I strongly question. But the point is not HOW MANY babies are now, or at any time, born in Germany, or anywhere else, but WHAT KIND of babies. The birth-rate may be satisfactory from the standpoint of officials whose business it is to juggle with vital statistics, but what is considerably more essential for the future German race is whether these babies are EUGENIC (healthy) or DYSGENIC (unhealthy)."

quotations from the *Manchester Guardian* show, the German anxiety for more substantial relief than promises were looked upon as, to say the least, decidedly bad taste. There were more pressing things to do than to feed Germany. The coming general election absorbed public attention. Mr. Lloyd George nailed his colours to the mast, and Liberals stood aghast at the devices thereon.

They did not like the idea of an election at all. It was a mistake, they thought, to turn people's attention on to political divisions at home instead of concentrating on the immeasurably greater problem of the establishment of world peace. Besides, there ought to be no political divisions at home, none at least warranting Mr. Lloyd George's demand for a mandate with which to go to the Peace Conference. The Government and the Allies had accepted Mr. Wilson's Fourteen Points as a basis for the settlement. All parties had endorsed that acceptance; nobody was disputing it. It was essential that the nation's unity on this vital matter should be preserved unimpaired until the crown had been set on victory

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After thus gloating over the plight of the babies, Mr. Wile quotes at length from a conversation he has had with Dr. Saleeby. Here are one or two extracts:—

"If German parents of to-day are mal-nourished, or under-fed, or semi-starved, or poisoned by the thousand and one so-called weird food 'substitutes' on which they are now existing, their offspring will be correspondingly inferior products. They will be subject to a vast variety of hereditary ailments. They will be less able to resist infections like tuberculosis. They may be crippled, deformed, or under-sized. What is certain is that no amount of dumb-bells, Indian clubs, or Prussian barrack-yard drill—no amount of gymnastics in the Germans' vaunted "Turnverein"—can straighten the legs or arms of the children of mal-nourished parents or pump good red blood into their anaemic veins, or otherwise modify the permanent marks which Nature will have imprinted upon their defective constitutions.

"While the birth-rate in Germany may be satisfactory on its face, the DAMAGE RATE—the INERADICABLE DAMAGE RATE—is a different and a far more serious matter. I should say that for every more or less normal infant life preserved in Germany under present conditions, there are three or four infants who are condemned to live and grow into DAMAGED HUMAN GOODS, so to speak. That means that in 1940 there will in all probability be a race of German physical degenerates."

by the conclusion of a peace that should for ever free the world from the menace of war. An election at such a moment would be the gravest of mistakes. It would be, for one thing, an election behind the backs of the soldiers. Neither the mind of the country, nor the machinery for ascertaining its mind, was ready. Despite its unity, the mind of the country needed a pause for reflection after the stupendous ordeal it had gone through.

But Mr. Lloyd George did not want a pause for reflection. He said that there was no time to lose. (Wolverhampton, November 24th.) We had got to make this country a land fit for heroes to live in *at once*. There were gigantic tasks ahead, and it was of supreme importance that he should not be hindered in dealing with them. He said frankly that he wanted no opposition, nor, for the matter of that, any Parliamentary checks upon his actions. His subsequent tactics showed that he was resolved to get rid of Liberalism, among other hindrances. He made a secret deal with the Tories by which he tied himself to Protection and Coercion for Ireland, and arranged that all Liberal nominees for election who were inclined to be critical should be replaced by those he could trust. He thereby secured the disappearance of Asquithian Liberalism, though he allowed Mr. Asquith to stand at the election, and made the Lloyd George-Tory victory of December 28th a foregone conclusion. Having arranged this débâcle, he announced the first two points of the British peace programme to be "Hang the Kaiser" and "Make Germany Pay."

It was not surprising that the *Daily News* had recourse to its favourite symbol of "A Plot" for the communication of its alarm. "The nation is in the presence not of an election but of a conspiracy," wrote A.G.G. ("The Great Cabal," November 23rd). The first fact to seize upon was, he said, that though the revelation was sudden, the plot was not sudden. It had governed the mysterious evolutions that had puzzled the country during the war.[2] The second fact was

[2] Some of these "mysterious puzzles" are dealt with in "How We Got On With the War." See Chapter on "The Conscriptionist Plot."

that the Press was in the plot. There were two plots, Lloyd George's plot for personal dictatorship, and the counter-plot of the Tory Party. The country had, said A. G. G., three weeks in which to realise its peril. "Three weeks in which to think. . . . Is it enough?" he asked.

It was not enough. But the *Daily News* worked hard in those three weeks. Its headlines were, from day to day: "Revolt Against the Coalition Conspiracy," "The Country on its Guard," "The Cabal Against Liberals," "Mr. Wilson Coming to Europe to Assist in Defeating the Conspiracy." "The Plot" opened its eyes at last to the insincerity of statesmen's professions of high aims. "Who is on Wilson's side, and who against him?" it cried. "It is true that the President's Fourteen Points have been accepted. But the acceptance of the letter is nothing." (This was a new discovery to the *Daily News*.) "It is the acceptance of the spirit that matters, and in what quarter do we see signs of that? . . . Mr. Lloyd George obeys the Northcliffe whips and appeals to the mob instinct. . . . Mr. Churchill talks of British naval supremacy (as until recently did also the *Daily News*).

"In the constituencies, the Coalition candidates are openly proclaiming the victory of Tariff Reform and the continuance of economic war after the war. . . . Still more sinister are the sleepless underground machinations directed to establishing conscription in this country. . . . Meanwhile are the omens better in France or Italy? . . . In all the world who are the statesmen who are backing not the letter but the spirit of President Wilson's policy. Can we name one? . . . The situation is full of menace."

The *Nation* and the *Manchester Guardian* agreed fervently. The latter, despite its editor's personal affection for the Prime Minister, an affection which had often led the *Guardian* to temper its wrath at his misdeeds, mourned over the way in which Mr. Lloyd George was "vulgarising the issue." "We venture to say that in no election within living memory have the issues been so paltry or the mode of their presentation been so reckless and vulgar." The

former, in an agony of disillusionment was, with frenzied vision, forecasting the horrors of a militarist peace—depicting Paradise Lost as vividly as it had painted Paradise Won.

"The peace is being made in Downing Street. The finishing touches will be laid on at the Hotel Majestic and in the Palace of Louis Quatorze. . . . The people will sit in darkness . . . and the only voice of democracy which will be heard will be that of the conquered countries. . . . French Nationalism has already mapped out a splendid panorama of revenge for 1870, spread over a wide scheme of spoil and conquest. There is to be a French province to the left bank of the Rhine . . . a lien to a capital amount of thousands of millions of pounds, including interest on the indemnity of the Franco-Prussian War, or about half of the existing production of industrial Germany. This involves a prolonged military occupation in which Britain must take her share. . . . Such a policy . . . will make disarmament impossible. There can be no League of Nations, no hope of peace. . . . Conscription must be retained . . . and with that act British liberty goes, as a sacrifice to the European Moloch and a sign that our boys have been betrayed and the war fought in vain." Pitilessly, ruthlessly, the *Nation* gazed at its ruined hopes; with passionate disappointment it saw the hideous reverse of them. The sight was torturing. Yet it could not bring itself to acknowledge the folly of having hoped; it could only denounce and hold up to ridicule the Minister whose "plot" had dissipated its dream. At no time during the war had the hopes of Liberals had substantial foundation; from beginning to end they had been deceived by no one more than by themselves. The "Great Betrayal," as they now melodramatically described the non-fulfilment of their hopes, was not December, 1918, but August, 1914, when, for their own mental comfort, they declared that those hopes were the country's war aims.

The Liberals turned in despair to President Wilson. It was natural, but it was hard on him. When history comes to study the end of the war she may be fairer to the President

than the present generation is likely to be. When she has investigated the origin of the war she may be less disposed to blame Mr. Wilson than the people who believed him capable of imposing upon the Allies a just and lasting peace. He talked no more impressively than the Liberals; he failed no more conspicuously than they. America was no more united than was this country on the spirit of the Fourteen Points. Mr. Roosevelt and his followers wanted to smash Germany as much as ever did the Northcliffe and Bottomley gang. The President, relying upon the support of those who relied upon him, came to grips with his opponents. He lost, and had not the courage to acknowledge his defeat. But did the Liberals show greater courage when, even after his downfall, they refused, and still refuse, to acknowledge the fundamental error of their beliefs? The *sacrifice* of millions of lives was in vain. Why? Because there was no *sacrifice,* only slaughter. Because the war was a shambles, not an altar, as unreason, tortured consciences, casuistry made believe. Reason never demanded sacrifice. "Look, see the utter waste," she cried unceasingly, but there were few to hear.

President Wilson sailed for England. He arrived in France on the day of the general election in this country. The issue had by then become terribly clear to the Liberals. "The Conscription Intrigue"; Mr. Lloyd George's ominous silence with regard to the Fourteen Points; his still more ominous emphasis upon the punitive side of the peace, had enlightened them. The Prime Minister's own references to the amount to be got out of Germany were discreetly vague, but his supporters were deliriously confident and their audiences rabid. "We will get out of Germany all you can squeeze out of a lemon and a bit more," Sir Eric Geddes promised, at Cambridge. "We will squeeze her until we hear the pips squeak." (Cheers.) "I have heard the Kaiser mentioned," said Mr. Barnes, Labour's representative in the War Cabinet. "Well, I am for hanging the Kaiser." (Cheers.)

A tempest of greed and revenge was blowing over the country. The Fourteen Points went to the winds. The *Times* political correspondent wrote, "It is the candidate who deals

with the issues of to-day, who adopts Mr. Barnes' phrase about 'hanging the Kaiser,' and plumps for the payment of the cost of the war by Germany, who rouses his audiences and strikes the notes to which they are most responsive." Liberal statesmen allowed these cries to be raised with little or no protest. To have disputed them publicly would have been dangerous, for it would have given rise to the suspicion that the disputants were "pro-German." Even the *Daily News,* which denounced Mr. Lloyd George's indemnity policy as utterly inconsistent with the Fourteen Points, dared not risk this. It "tacked" on the "Hang the Kaiser" stunt.

"With the decision as to the Kaiser's trial," it wrote on December 6th, after the publication of the Prime Minister's manifesto, "there will be small disposition to quarrel. If any tradition of the immunity of crowned heads still survives, it is wholly for the good of the world that it should be shattered for ever. The only question to be decided is, whether, in the event of a verdict of guilty, incarceration under the same conditions as any reprieved murderer would not be a more expedient, and, incidentally, *a harder penalty than execution.*"

But this suggestion that hanging was too good for the Kaiser, and that the Liberal way of dealing with him would be more gratifying to the emotions of the electorate than the Tory method, did not carry votes. The Liberals had nothing to offer comparable with the Lloyd George programme; it was useless for A. G. G. to implore the voter (December 14th, 1918) to "think well before you vote." "On your verdict great issues hang."

The British electorate of December, 1918, did not care a hang about great issues. It was tipsy with victory, and the Coalition programme answered to its idea of a political *feu de joie.* It recorded its tipsiness; Mr. Lloyd George swept the country; the "Old Gang" disappeared. As the *Times* remarked, "Every man, every party, every section of a party that has come under even the fringe of the shadow of the cloud of pacifism" paid the price. Without a single important exception, the whole Front Bench remnant of pre-war Lib-

eralism was destroyed. Mr. Asquith lost East Fife by 2,000 votes, and all his colleagues sheathed their swords with him.

It is difficult to choose from the comments that burst from the popular Press on this occasion. The following, from the *Daily Sketch,* was a good specimen of the prevailing taste:—

"Nobody won the war, but somebody seems to have won the election. Somebody . . . has swept the country, and swept it clean of pacifists and people with probes. The Opposition Liberals in the new Parliament will be 37 in number, Mr. Massingham![3] and as President Wilson said to the King just after they clinked their glasses, 'there is a great tide running in the hearts of men.' And, as President Wilson inquired of the Lord Mayor, 'What is the after-thought? We must see that honour and justice prevail . . . we are eager to get to the business and write the sentences down. . . .' So for the benefit of the Lloyd George Parliament, with its clear majority of 250, I am going to write and nail down here and now the 'sentences' to which that Parliament happens to be pledged; the 'sentences' to which it owes its existence, and which it must translate into action if 'honour and justice' are to 'prevail.' [It proceeded to nail down the heads of Mr. Lloyd George's programme, i.e., trial of the Kaiser; fullest indemnities from Germany; abolition of Conscription; Britain for the British; adequate provision for returned soldiers; a square deal for Britain at the Peace Conference; a happier country for all.] Looks like a tallish order, doesn't it? But it is no taller to-day than it was in the days before the election, during every hour of which it was vociferously promised, and between ourselves, we have a right to insist on every ounce of it from the promisers. We have pushed them in with no uncertain push. We have rid them of the rabblement which made a by-word of the old House of Commons—the cranks, the fiddle-fuddlers, the Labour 'cuckoos,' the Liberal crocodiles and crisis-mongers, the be-hanged-to-England and be-kind-to-Germany gang. . . . Therefore, let us put it flat once more, and remind everybody whom it may concern of

[3] Editor of the *Nation.*

the only fact which is that the new Parliament has been elected to carry out the seven-pointed British programme, nailed to the counter above. The rest can wait."

Decency forbids, but curiosity prompts, our turning to the *Daily News* at this moment. Despite the crushing defeat (*Daily News* headlines, December 30th, "Prime Minister's Triumph"; "Toryism Supreme") the Liberals bore up bravely.[4] Mr. Wilson was in England. His smile supported them. He was using great words, and there was nothing in his manner to show that he was downcast. "It is, of course, useless to shut one's eyes to the fact that all is not well," wrote the *Daily News* on New Year's Day, 1919. "While we have unexampled cause for thanksgiving and abundant food for hope, we are not wanting in grave reasons for anxiety. Prussian militarism has been destroyed, but it is by no means clear that militarism itself has been destroyed. . . . It has been notorious for weeks past that schemes of annexation based on secret treaties were being secretly pressed forward, that obscure designs in Russia were taking vague and menacing shape, and now we are confronted almost the day after President Wilson's speech in the City of London with M. Clemenceau's declaration in favour of the restoration of the system of the Balance of Power." But New Year emotions acted as a restorative, and on January 4th A. G. G. resumed his usual optimism. In his Saturday article, "Bloom or Blight,"[5] he wrote as follows:—

[4] See leading article December 30th, "The Rout and the Reckoning." "There are some victories so overwhelming as to alarm the victors. That of Saturday may well be one of them. It is much too complete to be convincing." (One can imagine how the *Daily News* would have dilated upon the "astonishing manifestation of the nation's unity" had the victory been on its side.)

[5] Mr. Gardiner has always been famous for presenting the political situation as offering a choice between two extremes, "Bloom or Blight," "Sheep or Goats," "President or Kaiser," "Christ or Clausewitz," "Black or White," "Bond or Free." His idealism has never permitted him to question whether the moment for choice has gone by or to face the fact that the choice was bad. Had he written the book of Genesis mankind might be under the impression that Eve was still hesitating whether or not to eat the apple.

"This week, the world has rung out the years of War and rung in the years of Peace. . . . The world happily consists of relatively sane people, who having had a tolerably sufficient experience of war, desire a world constituted for peace. . . . The assertion may seem daring in view of the result of an election fought on such themes as 'hanging the Kaiser' and 'firing' out the Hun. *But the significance of that result may easily be exaggerated.* It was the last flare-up of the great conflagration of the war. Philip was drunk with the emotions of five years' conflict and its triumphant close. It was natural and human that he should be drunk. . . . But with the New Year, Philip sober takes the reins from Philip drunk."

There was no evidence whatever for this "daring" assertion. Philip's drunkenness alone was responsible for the idea that he was sober.

The *Manchester Guardian* was also disposed to look on the bright side of the Liberal defeat at the election. "No doubt it is a big thing enough"—it said in its survey (January 2nd, 1919) of the "Politics of the New Year"—"but there is a general and well-grounded feeling that it is not quite so big as it looks." It was small, for instance, "measured by European standards, . . . indeed, quite a minor, a negligible event." "For Europe is in revolution, all its political landmarks removed, vast new forces released, all things in its political world in flux, the whole landscape in the present, the whole prospect in the future utterly changed." But nothing like that had happened in England. "Here it merely happens that people laugh a little at the clean sweep of the polls." "We poor items in the great aggregate of those who have voted and have lost or won may also have our reflections and look on, perhaps a little humorously, at the manœuvres of the politicians, the singular results they have achieved, and the possible consequences for them and for us, remembering all the time that there are tides in the affairs of men, and that as the tides rise so do they fall, remembering also that weak though we be individually, and of small account, yet in the mass we hold our fate in our own

hands, that the politicians are our creations, and that the greatest of them will vanish at a breath if so we will."

"The election was small, compared with European standards, indeed, quite a minor, a negligible event!" Minor, in view of the triumph which it registered for reaction; negligible, in view of the complete disregard and contempt which it showed those politicians, "our creations," to have for the fact that Europe was in revolution, all things in its political world in flux? *"Here it merely happens that people laugh a little at the clean sweep of the polls."* Merely! Was not this indifference the biggest event of all? The Liberals would have done better to have looked a little less humorously at the manœuvres of the politicians, at "the possible consequences for them and for us." The only humorous element in the situation lay in their apparently inexhaustible capacity for deceiving themselves.

13

THE OPENING OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE

THERE was some delay in opening the Peace Conference. Everyone regretted it, but it seemed unavoidable. No time had, of course, been lost in despatching a large staff of British officials to Paris and in requisitioning the Hotel Majestic and other premises for their accommodation but these preparations rather accentuated than compensated for the absence of the peace-makers.

It is true that Mr. Balfour was in France by the end of the year, taking a rest at Cannes before the commencement of his labours. The other statesmen, however, were more preoccupied. In England, the soldiers were rioting for demobilisation, and Mr. Lloyd George was busy with this trouble and with the reconstruction of his Cabinet. President Wilson, "having come to the conclusion" (*Pall Mall Gazette*), "as a result of his conversations with French, British, and Allied statesmen, that a complete understanding of the Allied position involved a much more extended personal enquiry than he had anticipated," had left the devastated regions and had gone to Italy. There, agitation for the annexation of Fiume and Dalmatia was growing in intensity and giving rise to fears among his supporters that the Fourteen Points were not thoroughly understood by the Italians. The speeches of M. Clemenceau and M. Pichon in the French Chamber, the former declaring for the old Balance of Power system and the latter even more threatening to the Wilson policy, were still more disquieting to Liberals. Moreover, European disorder was spreading. There was civil war in Berlin, where the Ebert Government was fighting the Spartacists, and chaos in Poland

and Russia, where the Allies were fighting or assisting to fight the Bolsheviks. The famine in Central Europe was becoming noticeable to newspaper correspondents, though the *Times* was doing its best to remove anxiety on the score of there being anything of the nature of starvation in Germany.[1]

The British Cabinet was at last composed[2] (January 11th, 1919), and on the same day it was announced that the Prime Minister and Mr. Bonar Law were leaving London for the purpose of holding preliminary conversations with the heads of the Allied and Associated Governments. Exclamations of relief burst from the Liberal newspapers which had been woefully engaged of late in counting the cost of delay. "Germany is drifting into sheer anarchy," said the *Daily News;* "the Russian riddle[3] is more obscure, but not apparently at all nearer solution than it was two months ago." "The Conference at last," said the *Manchester Guardian,* and its relief enabled it to believe that the delay, after all, had not been entirely waste of time. For, it said, owing to Mr. Wilson's visits to France and to Italy, all the countries and statesmen now know very well what the issues were, and "when the Conference begins to-day it will be with its course clear." "That is so far a real gain, and goes some way to compensate for the worse than waste of the long delay. For though the Conference has waited, the world has not stood

[1] See the *Times,* January 3rd, 1919, "German Hunger Bogey: abundance in the North-West; Improved Health; A Fat Land."

[2] Not very satisfactory, judging by Press comments. The *Times* said "a deep disappointment to Mr. Lloyd George's gigantic following . . . palpable misfits." The *Daily News* said that of all the appointments there was not one which was not "surprising." "If a man were to sit down and deliberately assign to the posts concerned the public men most manifestly unfit for them, his nomination would probably coincide very closely with those now published."

[3] Students of the *Daily News* will have noticed, as pointed out in Part II, this paper's tendency to describe as a "riddle," or "obscure," any situation which suggested a doubt that the Allies' motives were not perfectly straightforward. The Russian "riddle" had been quite plain for months past, the facts being the Allies' unwillingness to make peace with the Bolshevists and their repeated efforts, vicariously and otherwise, for their overthrow.

still. Mighty changes have been going on in other countries while we dallied, and it is a new and in many ways a far more difficult problem which the Conference will have to face to-day compared with that which would have faced it on the morrow of the armistice."

The primary difficulty, it said, which faced the Conference was that whereas two months ago there was a Germany and an Austria-Hungary with which it could deal, there was now neither the one nor the other. One of them was broken up into small states, the other was involved in a bitter internal struggle, and no one quite knew what was going to happen. Nor had events stood still in Russia and Poland. How were we going to deal, it asked, with these chaotic elements? with Poland, rapidly rushing into civil war; with the Baltic provinces, now falling into Bolshevik hands; with Bolshevik Russia herself, "who would gladly and eagerly come to terms with us if we would condescend to recognise her existence so far even as to hold communication with those who actually control, however they may mishandle her destinies."

The fact was, said the *Guardian*, the task which faced the Conference was a great *constructive* task. "We have to put Europe on its legs, and first and foremost we have to put Germany on her legs. . . ." If she was to be stopped on the slippery slope of anarchic revolution she must not only be fed but allowed raw material for industry. The food problem, it said, was even more urgent in Austria. As to Russia, it thought, a provisional arrangement could be "pretty easily" made, which would enable us to withdraw our troops, which, "obviously," it added, innocently, "remain only because they are there."[4] When the Conference had dealt with these matters, it would then, said the *Guardian*, be able to proceed undisturbed with the "real task" before it, which was, of course, "to establish a general principle of co-operation leading to peace in place of the old and well-established principle of mistrust and ambition leading inevitably to war." "It is a glorious undertaking, and as difficult, as glorious. None the less, we have good hope that it will be accomplished."

[4] The more obvious inference was that they were there because they were going to remain.

At this moment occurred the first "incident," as the *Times* described it, of the Conference. The *Humanité,* pursuing steadfastly its policy of opposition to M. Clemenceau and his Government, published a text of the reply given by M. Pichon to the British suggestion with regard to Russian representation at the Peace Conference. The reply refused to consider any such pacific proposal. "The French Government, for its part, refuses to enter into a compact with crime." "We should in agreeing to recognise the Bolshevik Government, fly in the face of the policy which the Allies have consistently and unitedly maintained by furnishing at all available points in Russia all possible help and relief to the healthy, honest and loyal elements of Russia, so as to assist them in escaping from the bloody and disordered tyranny of the Bolsheviks, and to help them to form by themselves a regular Government." "Mischief-making in Paris"; "Newspaper indiscretion," said the *Times.* "Its consequences may be regrettable . . . though, of course, it in no way disturbs the good agreement for a good peace between the French and British Governments." "It is not for its effects upon inter-Allied harmony that the publication of the *Humanité* is to be regretted; so solid a feeling is not likely to be influenced by such a petty indiscretion. What is regrettable is the atmosphere of suspicion which may thus be created, and which, no doubt, it was the intention of the *Humanité* to create."

The *Manchester Guardian* arrived at practically the same conclusion as the *Times* though it thought that the *Humanité* had done a "real service" by its publication of M. Pichon's despatch. For Liberals generally had reached the point of realising that there was a difference of opinion among the statesmen—"palpable, acute, and cannot be glossed over"—but their humour allowed them to believe that the difference could be "reconciled." "We do not for a moment believe that, if frankly faced and handled in an entirely friendly spirit, it cannot be reconciled and a common policy evolved." How two diametrically opposite opinions could be reconciled, they did not suggest; they could hardly have meant that there was no real difference between the Wilson

and Clemenceau policies, as the President himself afterwards implied when he said that the Peace was in keeping with the Fourteen Points. They probably did not know what they meant, but they liked the word "reconciled." They were too confident to feel unfriendly towards a difference which they were quite sure would be overcome. They even welcomed it—the sight of it gave them a sense of reality. They were dimly aware that they had not altogether "faced facts" during the war. "Let's have the difference out and have done with it," they said to themselves genially (*Manchester Guardian*). "It need not disturb us. It is only a beginning. A great many and perhaps much more serious difficulties are likely to arise in the course of the Conference, and they will all have to be adjusted in some fashion, this one among them. For it is well to realise at the very start of these proceedings that the Great Powers who have been so splendidly united in war, and who intend quite definitely and determinedly to remain united in peace, are yet by no means wholly at one with one another on many important and even vital matters of policy, or indeed in their whole outlook, at all events as represented by their official statesmen. It is well frankly to realise this because in any case the fact is sure to assert itself, and we can best deal with the difficulty, which is a very real though by no means insuperable one, by recognising its existence and then setting to work to discover the path along which union and safety can be found." "And perhaps this little initial quarrel about Russia may aid us both in the recognition and in the discovery." In short, they evidently looked upon it as a blessing in disguise.

The chief delegates to the Peace Conference spent a week over preliminaries. Their first meeting, which, as the *Times* pointed out, was "a meeting of the old Inter-Allied Council of Versailles, with the addition of President Wilson," took place on Sunday, January 12th, 1919. There were many things besides the "little initial quarrel" about Russia to absorb their attention. The question of representation at the Conference had to be decided.

A scheme prepared by the French Government was con-

sidered. The *Times* outlined it (January 10th). Each of the five Big Powers (France, Great Britain, the United States, Italy, and Japan) was to have five delegates. The British Dominions were also to be given representation. The other nations were graded according to the amount of assistance they had rendered to the Allies during the war. Belgium, Servia, Greece, Rumania, Portugal, China, and Brazil—"those States which threw their whole weight into the war"—were each to have three delegates. "States which are in process of formation, thanks to the support they have given to the Allies, such as Poland and the Czecho-Slovak Republic," were to have two delegates. One delegate only was to be allowed to countries which had only succeeded in being "more or less technically at war" with the Central Powers. It went without saying that enemies and neutrals were excluded.

The French scheme was adopted, after a few alterations. At first Brazil was put into a class by itself with three delegates—"owing to its important population," said the *Times;* while Belgium, Servia, Greece, Rumania, Portugal and China were reduced to the status of Poland and the Czecho-Slovak Republic and given only two delegates each. But this created so much feeling among the Belgians and Serbians, who did not see why they should be considered less deserving than Brazil, that they were finally admitted to her rank. Siam's representation was also raised from one to two delegates. Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Nicaragua and Panama were each given one delegate, as also were Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay (Powers in a state of diplomatic rupture with the enemy). Montenegro was given a delegate, but the regulations prescribed that his designation could not be fixed "until the moment when the political situation of this country shall have been cleared up." It was further decided that only the five Big Powers were to attend all the meetings. "The other negotiators will be present only when questions affecting their national interests are under discussion." This decision caused commotion among the little Powers, and they were bold enough to protest at the second full meeting of the Conference, but M. Clemenceau,

"in his decisively French manner," disposed of their protests by telling them they might thank the Allies that they were there at all. "Why," he argued, "if it had not been for the fine ideal of a League of Nations and a desire to make a world peace, the Great Powers, consulting their own national interests, perhaps in a selfish manner, would have been entitled to hold a purely selfish consultation as to the kind of world they wished to fashion with the power of their victories." (The *Times,* January 27th.) "As it is," he continued, "we have convoked all those nations which in any way have shown their sympathy with us, and we have asked them to help us." The little nations took the snubbing gracefully. "M. Hymans, who made himself spokesman of the smaller nations in arguing their rights to have greater representation, yielded to M. Clemenceau's appeal and left the interests of those smaller nations in the hands of the Great Powers."

There was also a great deal of discussion about publicity. All sections of the Press found it hard to imagine that the Conference would inaugurate its labours by disregarding the First of the Fourteen Points. ("Free and open covenants, openly arrived at.") But the decision, issued on January 15th, to enforce a rigorous censorship on all news straying outside the limits of the official communiqué, was suspicious, and the Press protested vigorously. "Unfortunately," said the *Times* (January 17th), "the truth seems to be that the majority of the delegates still do not understand the meaning of publicity and in their heart of hearts still regard the Press, without whose support the war could not have been won, as a dangerous and impertinent intruder into the diplomatic holy of holies." The Press, however, was not altogether excluded; having thrown its full weight into the war, it was classed with the little nations and admitted to meetings of the full Conference. It yielded as gracefully as the small nations had done, and printed in full, with no criticism, the official statement of reasons why secrecy in discussion was vital to the cause of peace.[5]

[5] "The representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers have given earnest consideration to the question of publicity for the proceedings of

At three o'clock in the afternoon of Saturday, January 18th, 1919, the full Conference was opened in the gorgeous Clock Room of the French Foreign Office. The *Times* correspondent called it a Pageant of the Alliance, and devoted

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the Peace Conference. They are anxious that the public through the Press should have the fullest information compatible with safeguarding the supreme interest of all, which is that a just and honourable settlement should be arrived at with the minimum of delay.

It is, however, obvious that publicity with regard to the preliminary conversations now proceeding must be subject to the limitations necessarily imposed by the difficult and delicate nature of their object. The conversations of the Great Powers are far more analogous to the meetings of a Cabinet than those of a legislature. Nobody has ever suggested that Cabinet meetings should be held in public, and, if they were so held, the work of government would become impossible.

One reason why Cabinets are held in private is in order that differences may be reconciled and agreement reached before the stage of publicity is begun. The essence of democratic method is not that deliberations of a Government should be conducted in public, but that its conclusions should be subject to the considerations of a popular Chamber and to free and open discussion on the platform and in the Press.

The representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers are holding conversations in order to solve questions which affect the vital interests of many nations, and upon which they may at present hold many diverse views. These deliberations cannot proceed by the method of a majority vote. No nation can be committed except by the free vote of its own delegates. The conclusions arrived at at these consultations, therefore, can only be formed by the difficult process of reaching agreement among all.

This vital process would only be hindered if the discussion of every disputed question were to open by a public declaration by each delegation of its own national point of view. Such a declaration would in many cases be followed by a premature public controversy. This would be serious enough if it were confined to controversy between parties within each State. It might be extremely dangerous if, as would often be inevitable, it resulted in controversy between nations. Moreover, such public declarations would render that give-and-take on the part of the delegates themselves which is essential to a successful negotiation a matter of infinitely greater difficulty.

SPEED IN SETTLEMENT

It is also extremely important that the settlement should be not only just but speedy. Every belligerent Power is anxious for the early

pages of picturesque description to the moving scene. "We had for the first time in concrete form before our eyes the great World Alliance which has won the war. Peru and China could be seen hobnobbing; Australia could talk to the Hedjaz, Ecuador to the Czecho-Slovaks, and but for the saving grace of French and English tongues, the meeting might have been the Tower of Babel. All sorts of people talked to each other in all sorts of accents, in tongues foreign to them all. An American said to me: 'At last I have seen the British Empire. There are Botha, Smuts, Balfour, Hughes, and Borden gathered together.'"

M. Poincaré, as President of the French Republic, opened the Conference. He welcomed the delegates, and told them that what gave them authority to establish a peace of justice was the fact that none of the peoples they represented

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conclusion of peace, in order that its armies may be demobilised and that it may return once more to the ways of peace. If premature publicity is given to the negotiations, the proceedings of the Peace Conference would be interminably protracted, and the delegates would be forced to speak not only to the business before the Conference but to concern themselves with the controversies which had been raised by the account of their proceedings outside.

Finally, there will often be very strong reasons against announcing the conclusions of the conversations as they are arrived at. Representatives of a nation may be willing to give their assent on one point only provided they receive concessions on another point which has not yet been discussed.

It will not be possible to judge of the wisdom and justice of the peace settlement until it can be viewed as a whole, and premature announcements might lead to misapprehensions and anxiety as to the ultimate results for which there was no real foundation.

In calling attention to these necessary limitations on publicity the representatives of the Powers do not underrate the importance of carrying public opinion with them in the vast task by which they are confronted. They recognise that unless public opinion approves of the result of their labours they will be nugatory. This reasoning applies with conclusive force to the present conversations between the representatives of the Great Powers.

With regard to the full Conferences, the following rule was adopted:—

Representatives of the Press shall be admitted to the meetings of the full Conference, but upon necessary occasions the deliberations of the Conference may be held in camera."

had had any part in injustice. There was no need—he said—to inquire into the origins of the war because everyone knew that Germany had plotted and begun it. He traced the gradual participation of the big and little Powers in the struggle between brute force and justice, and was listened to by the whole assembly standing, though there were many present who did not understand what was being said to them. But Mr. Lloyd George, "whose knowledge of French has been immensely increased by the war, turned a comprehending ear towards M. Poincaré, as did Mr. Wilson." (The *Times.*) Then Mr. Wilson rose, and, with a few well-chosen words, proposed M. Clemenceau as permanent Chairman, and in an even happier speech Mr. Lloyd George seconded the proposal. The *Times,* however, thought that M. Clemenceau made the speech of the day. "He spoke of the League of Nations with a sincerity surprising to those who had failed to observe the gradual bent of his mind towards a practical idealism which can alone enable the Conference to surmount the difficulties that beset it." "As he spoke, the pulse of the Conference beat quicker, and when at the close he placed the League of Nations on the order of the day for the next sitting it seemed a natural climax to an oration which at some moments possessed the tone and earnestness of a sermon."

Before that climax had been reached, the question of the responsibilities of the authors of the war had been introduced and disposed of for the day by M. Clemenceau, as follows:—

"We beg of you to begin by examining this question. I do not need to set forth our reasons for this. If we wish to establish justice in the world we can do so now, for we have won victory and can impose the penalties demanded by justice. We shall insist on the imposition of penalties on the authors of the abominable crimes committed during the war. Has anyone any question to ask in regard to this? If not, I would again remind you that every delegation should devote itself to the study of this first question which has been made the subject of reports by eminent jurists and of a report which will be sent you, entitled 'An Inquiry into the Criminal Responsibility of the Emperor William II.' (This was a

memorandum prepared by the French Government.) The perusal of this brochure will, without doubt, facilitate your work. In Great Britain and in America studies on this point have also been published. No one having any remark to make, the programme is adopted."

Thereupon the pageant dissolved, the ceremony having lasted about an hour and a half. The only speeches made were those of M. Poincaré and the Big Five. "A great task simply begun," said the *Manchester Guardian.*

14

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

PLENARY conferences, i.e., of all the delegates, were few and far between. In all, six were held during the five months' preparation of the Peace Treaty. (January-May, 1919.) The second of these (January 25th) was for the purpose of appointing the League of Nations Commission and four other Commissions; the third (February 14th) for considering the Labour Charter; at the fourth and fifth (April 9th and April 28th) the League of Nations Covenant was submitted and accepted. The sixth (May 6th) was a secret session, at which the terms of the Peace were for the first time disclosed to the small Powers, on the day before they were presented to the Germans.

The main work at Paris, as everyone knows, was carried on by the Council of Ten, the Supreme Council of the Allies, consisting of two representatives of each of the Great Powers, which was subsequently dissolved and its place taken by a Council of five Foreign Ministers, and by the "Big Four" (M. Clemenceau, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George, and Signor Orlando), who at their meetings kept no minutes. These, as The *Times* said, were the planets in the heavens of peace, "which also contain a regular Milky Way of committees and sub-committees." There were committees dealing with the League of Nations; responsibility for the war and punishment; reparations; international labour legislation; international control of ports, waterways and railways; financial questions; economic questions; aeronautics; territorial questions; military and naval matters; control of war production in Germany and disarmament of Germany; specification of war material to be demanded from Germany, so as to render

her unable to restart the war; study of means for forcing Germany to observe the armistice conditions; drafting committees on military, naval and air terms; Morocco; submarine cables, and the Supreme Economical Council. The *Times* (April 19th) reckoned that there were seventeen main committees and thirty-nine sub-committees and sections.

But though the full body of delegates was not consulted with regard to the Peace terms, beyond seeing the Covenant and the Labour "Charter," and having the treaty secretly divulged to them at the last moment, it would be untrue to suggest that they and the public were ignorant of the matters under discussion by the Council of Ten or the "Big Four," and of the decisions arrived at by these bodies. When the Peace Treaty was presented, it contained no surprises; there was nothing in it that had not been announced at some time or other in the columns of the newspapers. No official decisions were, of course, published (except the Draft of the League of Nations Covenant), but the proceedings of the planets and the lesser luminaries were, nevertheless, distinctly visible.

"The representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers," said the official statement of reasons for secret discussion, "are holding conversations in order to solve questions which affect the vital interests of many nations, and upon which they may at present hold many diverse views." The vital interests and diverse views were common talk in Paris, and the conversations of the Ten or the "Big Four" were the counterpart of what went on every day, without reserve, wherever journalists, politicians and diplomatists were gathered together. Brief official communiqués of the secret meetings were issued, but the newspaper correspondents supplemented these with lengthy reports which, as noted above, were quite remarkable in their forecasts of the final settlement. The newspaper reports differed in tone, in their approval or disapproval of the solutions reached, in the amount of confidence their writers were consequently or nevertheless able to indulge in as regards the satisfactoriness of the peace that was being made, but there were no differ-

ences of opinion as to the decisions themselves, and the main provisions of the Treaty were as accurately predicted by the Paris correspondents of the *Daily News* and *Manchester Guardian* as by those of the *Times, Telegraph* and *Morning Post.*

Considering the information at their disposal, it is surprising that the editorial columns of the Liberal press maintained their faith in the prospect of a just and lasting peace. They seemed incapable of realising that the ideals which they believed in could be defeated. They surveyed the Paris proceedings, unflinchingly, acknowledged the existence of gloomy portents, yet persisted in an optimism as regards the final outcome which was nothing short of marvellous. Their fears and anxieties were patent, however, in the exaggerated rejoicing which they indulged in when news came, as it did occasionally, that the worst had not happened. Like Dives in Hell, imploring a drop of water for the easing of his torments, they welcomed the faintest sign of accord between the Paris policy and their own hopes.

The Supreme Council's decision, announced January 22nd, to invite all the contending Governments of Russia to a conference at Prinkipo, in the Sea of Marmora, delighted the Liberals. "The most important diplomatic event that has taken place since the Armistice," said the *Manchester Guardian.* "The decision is of the best augury." "To begin with, it displays an admirable spirit of compromise among the Powers themselves, for there is no disguising the fact that some of them were at first intensely opposed to any sort of conference which should include Bolshevik Russia, and in the second place, because this approach is undertaken in a genuine spirit of disinterestedness and of peace, in the very spirit indeed which must supply the essential atmosphere for a League of Nations. It is therefore something more than an approach to the distracted peoples of Russia . . . it is the first act in the great drama of the establishment of the world's peace." "Wireless invitation to all Russian Groups." "Striking Declaration of Friendship" said the effusive headlines of the *Daily News.* The *Times* correspondent wrote: "Grave

misgivings are expressed in the French press and in many other quarters in regard to the proposal . . . about the only thing said in its favour is that it is better for the Bolsheviks to be asked to go to the Sea of Marmora than to come to Paris . . . it is hoped that the inauguration of so doubtful an adventure into the realms of diplomacy will not preclude the earnest consideration of more practical plans in case the Bolsheviks prove recalcitrant." (More practical plans were being almost daily advocated, or hinted at, in a front-page column of the *Times,* under the heading of "The Bolshevist Menace.") Both M. Sazonoff and Prince Lvoff, said the *Times,* had immediately declared that nothing would induce them to go to the Sea of Marmora. "They are just as indignant at apparently being placed upon the same footing as the Bolshevists as public opinion in France and Great Britain was when Mr. Wilson, in the days of his neutrality, seemed to think it possible that all the belligerents were more or less equally guilty."[1]

"It is doubtful whether the Allies will pay great attention to the uncompromising temper of the émigrés," said the *Manchester Guardian.* The doubt vanished, the protests accumulated, a furious outburst went on in the French Press. A letter was addressed to M. Clemenceau by a League of Russian Groups, expressing "grief and consternation" and imploring the Allies to "recognise the impossibility of Russians taking part in a meeting with the object of conciliating what is irreconcilable, namely, honour and dishonour, justice and injustice, loyalty to alliances and shameless betrayal, civilisation and a reign of terror, democracy and tyranny, a small minority of hangmen and their victims." This impressive array of similes, coupled with the presence in Paris of so many anti-Bolshevik Russians, was effective. Though the Bolsheviks accepted the Prinkipo invitation and declared themselves willing to pay the Russian debt interest and to grant concessions in mines, forests, etc., to Entente capitalists,

[1] See also M. Pichon's statement to journalists, February 2nd, that all replies from the various Governments in Russia to the invitation to a Conference had been, with one exception, in the negative.

the matter was dropped by the Supreme Council. "That particular proposal has been abandoned," said the *Guardian*, "but it is urgent that some other should take its place." "Prinkipo is in abeyance, but there ought to be a successor to Prinkipo."

There was no successor to Prinkipo. The first act in the great drama of the establishment of the world's peace came to a standstill.

Meanwhile other "momentous" events had occurred. A Second Plenary Conference had been summoned (Jan. 25th). Mr. Wilson had made his "moving" appeal for the League of Nations, and a Commission had been appointed to draft its constitution. "The world will have its League of Nations," wrote the correspondent of the *Daily News* (John Bell). "This is the dominant impression I carried away from the Peace Conference to-night."

"Every sentence of the speech was arresting, but his words thrilled towards the end. And the end was not an eloquent peroration, but a warning uttered in low tones: that the fortunes of mankind were in the hands of the plain people of the whole world, and that the League of Nations was the key of all the Peace programme." "There was no doubt about the effect produced on the delegates. M. Clemenceau, with his head on his hand, his eyes fixed on Mr. Wilson's face, drank in every word."

"The world has received its marching orders," said the *Daily News* leading article, "and there is no shadow of doubt that it will obey them to the fullest limit of its instruction." "No more momentous decision was ever reached in the affairs of human society. It marks, we may reasonably and confidently believe, the inauguration of a new world." "It is the happiest of omens that this far-reaching resolution was adopted with absolute unanimity. Not a hand was raised nor a voice heard in opposition. We may doubt whether such a measure of agreement has ever been reached at the initiation of an idea affecting such various and opposed interests." The discussions in the Council of Ten, it noticed, were already reflecting the spirit of the League. Had not Reuter just re-

ported that Great Britain was willing to leave such questions as the future of Mesopotamia, Palestine, and the German Colonies, to the League of Nations? This statement, reported the day before, had evoked an equally enthusiastic article, in which, as usual, the particular decision in question was hailed as "the greatest victory of the war"—"an impressive demonstration of the subjection of material interest to moral purpose." A few days later, Jan. 29th, a flaw appeared in this impressive demonstration. A confidential exchange of views between the Great Powers and the British Dominions on the subject of the German Colonies was reported to be going on. President Wilson's idea of a mandatory system was being discussed. Major-General Maurice (*Daily News* correspondent) wrote: "Australia holds very pronounced views upon the destination of the German Colonies in the Southern Pacific, and Japan is not less decided as to the fate of the northern group of German islands." "Australia, in particular, feels strongly that undisputed possession of the islands bordering on Australasia is the only compensation she can obtain for her great sacrifices in the war." The *Times* had a leading article, "Trusteeship or Possession," admitting that there was a good deal to be said for the mandatory system—"the principle which it embodies, after all, is nothing more than the principle on which our own Imperial system is based," but arguing that there was no advantage in riding the principle to death. "By all the laws of race, geography and convenience, it is far better to hand them over frankly to the Dominions of S. Africa, Australia or New Zealand than to consider them beneficiaries under reluctant trustees."

Mr. Hughes, the Australian Premier, wrote a letter on the subject of his claims to the Press. The *Daily News* denounced him as "A Public Danger." "Have we really got rid of the Kaiser only to be saddled with Mr. Hughes?" it said, excitedly. "A few more unscrupulous perversities of this kind and the hopes of the world will be in deadly peril."

Mr. Hughes was propitiated. The Mandatory Principle was announced. "Triumph of League Principles," "The Right Atmosphere," said the *Daily News*. "The prin-

ciple in which the claims of the League and Dominions have been adroitly harmonised seems essentially sound." The adroitness was revealed in a telegram from the Central News Agency as follows:

"NON-INTERFERENCE WITH TRUSTEES"

"I am authoritatively informed that the arrangements regarding the conquered territories conform closely to the principles enunciated in the British League of Nations scheme. For Britain to have insisted upon an unqualified annexation would have been a stultification of these principles. On the other hand, President Wilson conceded a substantial modification by accepting the principle that the League of Nations, when in being, shall not interfere with the established policy of the trustee countries in the former German colonies coming under their control."

The Liberals raised no objection to this concession which made good the *Times'* argument that the mandatory principle was nothing more than the principle upon which the British Empire was based. The word "mandatory" had been adopted, and in view of this triumph the League of Nations was considered assured. "It is not too much to say that the successful establishment of the league is now certain," General Maurice wrote to the *Daily News,* February 4th. "There is still much criticism to be met and many difficulties to be overcome, but the nearer we get to the difficulties the smaller they appear." The League of Nations Commission was beginning its sittings and the general state of opinion in Paris was reported to be growing favourable to the scheme. "The anger of the reactionaries of all nations is the best proof that a new world order is coming into being," said Mr. A. F. Whyte, *Daily News,* February 3rd. On the same day another correspondent, Mr. John Bell, reported the surprising amiability prevailing among Balkan disputants, which showed in what an admirable spirit the work of the Conference was going on. "There is a keen desire to reach an agreement in all matters and a spirit of goodwill always manifests itself in the discussion of differences of opinion." The attitude of the

Rumanians and Serbians, their "moderation, good temper and friendliness when they stood face to face to present their claims to the Banat of Temesvar" was given as an illustration. Mr. Balfour put the finishing touch to this picture of "Conference Harmony" by stating (Reuter, February 3rd): "It is true that there has been much discussion, but there is really no divergence of view or dispute as to facts. We are in agreement as regards the chief problems. The words by which the agreements are to be sealed alone remain to be settled."

"Peace Difficulties Vanishing": "Balkan and Adriatic Agreement in Sight" were the *Daily News* headlines on February 8th, and such progress had been made that the approaching departure from Paris of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George was announced. Mr. Wilson was returning to America to transact necessary business of State, but before leaving he presented to a plenary Conference (No. 3) the Draft Covenant of the League. The constitution bore considerable resemblance to that of the Peace Conference, the Executive Council in whose hands all power was concentrated being controlled by the five Entente Powers, and the body of delegates, representatives of the lesser Allies, being given very little to do. Neutrals as well as enemies were excluded from the list of foundation members. Successive Articles providing for limitation of armaments (standard to be determined by Executive), arbitration (non-justiciable disputes to be referred to Executive), admission of new members, mandatory administration of colonies, peace safeguards, punishment of guilty States (obliging all nations, whether members of the League or not, to sever all relations with the guilty Power) demonstrated the completeness of the weapon of domination which the Allies had forged. The *Times* wrote approvingly: "Those who thought that the League of Nations was only a project of international amiability will change their minds when they read the Covenant published to-day. . . . Peace and its preservation is for the first time equipped with thunders of its own."

15

ARMISTICE RENEWALS

THE original armistice agreement, signed November 11th, 1918, was for thirty-six days, "with option to extend." It was renewed for another month on December 12th, and in January, 1919, when the Peace Conference was opening, it came up again for renewal. The Allied Governments then objected to prolonging the first agreement and demanded further concessions. Germany was to hand over some 58,000 agricultural machines of various kinds, "new and in very good condition, with the spare parts necessary for eighteen months' service." All submarines capable of taking to the sea or of being towed were to be surrendered immediately. Those which could not be surrendered were to be destroyed and dismantled under the supervision of the Allies. The construction of submarines was to cease and submarines in course of construction were to be destroyed. "In order to assure the supply of foodstuffs to Germany and the rest of Europe," Germany was to hand over her merchant fleet. As a further safeguard, the Allied High Command reserved to itself "the right to occupy, whenever it may think fit," that sector of the fortress of Strasbourg formed by the fortifications on the right bank of the Rhine with a strip of territory of from five to ten kilometres in front. There were also financial clauses subjecting Germany to the financial and economic dictatorship of the Entente.

These terms were signed by German delegates in Marshal Foch's saloon carriage at Treves on January 16th. Herr Erzberger protested before signature. "The German people want peace," he said, "but the Allies do not, even to-day, speak of peace but only of prolonging the armistice." When

were the terms of a preliminary peace going to be ready? The German Government, he said, had asked six times for a preliminary peace, but had received no reply. Finally, he asked, when would the Allies raise the blockade? Germany's food conditions were daily growing worse, and hunger would produce a mental condition which would have consequences the Allies could not desire.

The famine-stricken conditions of Germany had by this time become noticeable to one or two English Press correspondents. Mr. H. W. Nevinson, correspondent for the *Daily News,* repeatedly insisted upon the desperate plight of people in Cologne and other places which he visited. It needed courage to draw public attention in England to these matters. The *Manchester Guardian* correspondent wrote in March: "A neutral journalist who has long been here (Berlin) acting also as correspondent for a London daily, and whose diagnosis of the situation is identical with my own ('Germany on the Verge of Famine'), said on being asked why he had not so described the situation, 'The English Press would not stand it and I would lose my appointment.'" English people did not care to hear that the Germans were starving. The acknowledgment would have implied that the blockade policy was at fault. The blockade had been continued in order to secure Germany's obedience to the peace treaty when it was ready to be dictated, and a measure, prompted by such excellent intentions, could not be criticised. Besides, the Allies had undertaken to feed Germany, and consequently there was no need to be agitated because she had not yet done so. German pleadings for food when they *were* heard were dismissed as extravagant or nonsensical, but, in general, they were *not* heard. The daily Press, with one or two exceptions, did not report them. The general public, with a few exceptions, overlooked such reports as there were. The overlooking was unconscious; its unconsciousness was one of those phases of war psychology which the *Manchester Guardian* had had occasion to observe.

Mr. Nevinson wrote in the *Daily News,* on January 20th, January 27th, February 4th, and said that there was

danger of an Indian famine in Germany. Hunger was becoming steadily worse among the lower middle and working classes. The children were the chief sufferers, and German medical authorities, whom he had consulted, were in despair. The Burgomaster of Cologne informed him that unless the blockade was raised and the barriers on trade removed he saw nothing for the country but starvation and absolute famine. The Burgomaster also dwelt at length upon a point which Mr. Nevinson said that he himself had often noticed since he had entered Germany with the Allies. "I mean the extreme nervous exhaustion of the people. They seem incapable both of exertion and emotion. They are even incapable of hatred. . . . They are stunned and dazed, partly, no doubt, at the immensity of their sudden fall from prosperity, but chiefly, I believe, from hunger." The Cologne death-rate, he said, had more than doubled since 1914. On an average, seven people a day died from starvation. Yet the most tragic aspect was not death but diseased and exhausted life. The existing food supply was "too much for death and too little for life."

But the Allies had other things to think about than food conditions in Germany. They were busy with other problems (see previous chapter), and with the ever-pressing question of what further demands should be made upon Germany when the time came round again for renewing the armistice. The January 16th agreement was due to expire on February 17th, and in view of alarming rumours as to the military strength and resources still possessed by the enemy, the compulsory surrender of more war material with a further enforced reduction of her armies was contemplated. The French regarded the situation as very serious. When the German National Assembly had opened at Weimar on February 7th, President Ebert had denounced the Allies, protested against the "unheard-of severity" of the armistice, and threatened to take no part in the peace negotiations if "the Allies' plans of revenge and domination" tried Germany beyond the limits of her endurance. The only peace, he said, that Germany was prepared to accept was a peace without victory.

Germany's "Plans to Win the Peace" were revealed in

an article by Frank H. Simonds in the *Times* (February 12th). "Real German purpose," said the article, was being disclosed not only at Weimar but with even greater clarity at Berne, "where, in the world assembly of Socialists, the German representatives were showing themselves prepared to transform the whole face of the situation and to save Germany all the just consequences of her crime by invoking not only the doctrines of Socialism, but the pronouncements of President Wilson." It was as if, said Mr. Simonds, "a murderer suddenly got religious and demanded that all his past crimes should be forgiven and forgotten, since, under the shadow of the gallows, he had embraced the true faith not only with readiness but with obvious enthusiasm. The Germans see clearly that this is their single avenue of escape. . . . And the way to achieve this end is unmistakable. He must appeal to the elements in all enemy and neutral countries whose idealism or congenital blindness makes them the easiest victims of his new propaganda.

"The danger of this new campaign," concluded Mr. Simonds, "can hardly be exaggerated. It is gaining headway in many places. It is finding converts in many American quarters. It bids fair to capture international Socialism as represented at Berne. . . . It will mean, if it succeeds, that we shall have lost the war, and Germany will emerge the only victor with all of Russia as her first intermediate prey and all her Eastern ambitions revitalised. . . . If Germany escapes from her terrible destruction she wins the war."

The Supreme War Council was alive to the dangers which Mr. Simonds indicated. Marshal Foch, it was reported (February 10th) had made a "declaration of a somewhat serious character" at a meeting of the Supreme War Council. He said that he felt that the Germans were beginning to forget that they were beaten. They had been slow in handing over transport and other things. They were causing a great deal of difficulty. They were not demobilising as fast as they should. It was most important to take measures which would prevent any danger of the Allies losing their position of being able to dictate what peace terms they chose. The British were

reported (February 10th) to agree entirely with this view, and Mr. Wilson was said to have stated (Reuter, February 13th) that the Germans had better do as they were told, or if they did not "he would not hesitate to give orders to the American Army to take up arms again."

M. Clemenceau asserted that industrially Germany had won the war. "Proof" of the systematic way in which the enemy had set out to ruin French industry was laid before the Supreme Council by M. Klotz, the French Finance Minister. The French Press was fanatical; the English Press sympathised with what the *Daily News* called "France's legitimate and natural anxiety." The British view on the Supreme Council of the armistice question, said Mr. John Bell (*Daily News,* February 11th), was "short and clear." "To remove militarism from Europe the British peace delegates feel that a start should be made where militarism began—in Germany. It is there, they say, that the habit of conscription should be broken off." It was found that there was not enough time to draw up at once comprehensive terms which should achieve this purpose. Marshal Foch was accordingly despatched again to Treves to impose a short renewal of the armistice—it was thought for about a fortnight—until the Supreme War Council, on the advice of their military experts, should have completed a general scheme which would obviate the necessity for periodic renewals. "The basis of this scheme," reported General Maurice (*Daily News,* February 14th), would be the fixing of Germany's military strength on a scale which would remove all cause for anxiety in France and make it evident to everyone that there was no danger of any military resistance to the fulfilment of the peace terms. "There is no question," said General Maurice, "of allowing any argument and discussion by Germany of these terms except in points of detail. The Allied and Associated Powers are unanimous in their intention to make it clear to Germany that they intend to dictate to her the terms upon which they are agreed." "It is very much to be hoped," he added, "that these decisions (i.e., re general scheme of German disarmament) will have the effect of removing the

sense of irritation in the French Press which has for some time past been a cause of anxiety to all who are eager to see the Conference get on with the main business—the creation of a just and lasting peace."

So that about the same time as President Wilson was presenting the League of Nations Covenant to the third plenary Conference, and declaring as he did so, "Force is vanquished. The peoples can now live as members of one family and join as brothers," Marshal Foch was on his way to Treves to inform the Germans of the latest conditions of the renewal of the armistice. The terms were the prompt fulfilment of all conditions hitherto imposed upon Germany at the original armistice and at each of the subsequent renewals; the cessation of hostilities with Poland (who herself refused to cease hostilities) and all German troops to be withdrawn behind a fixed boundary, and the right for the Allies to terminate this agreement if they chose at three days' notice. "This," explained General Maurice, rather unnecessarily, "gives us the power to apply the screw to Germany as soon as it is discovered that she is endeavouring to evade unreasonably any of the terms imposed upon her," but the principal reason, he added, was that "fresh terms, which will be ready very shortly, are now being drafted by the Supreme War Council in Paris and that before many days are past Marshal Foch will be making another journey to Treves." "These new terms will fix a definite scale for the naval and military establishment of Germany, which, while allowing her adequate forces for the maintenance of internal order will remove any anxiety as to the possibility of her offering armed resistance to the demands which may be made upon her." It would be a good thing, he said, to have the matter settled, for the method hitherto adopted of monthly renewals of the armistice, coupled with increased demands, made the German Government's position extraordinarily difficult. A new Government was trying to establish itself at Weimar, and it did not know from month to month where it stood. It was in our interest, General Maurice pointed out, that the German Government should be firmly established. How other-

wise were we going to get the indemnity out of Germany? Mr. Bonar Law had recently announced (February 13th) in the House of Commons that British delegates had been instructed to demand not only reparation, but an indemnity to cover the cost of the war. At the same time M. Loucheur, the French Minister, was announcing in the French Chamber that the bill for the reparation of the devastated provinces of France would alone come to £3,000,000,000. There was not much chance of getting anything, said General Maurice, unless Germany possessed a settled Government. The Germans signed the third renewal after protest. Herr Erzberger, said the *Daily News*, played cleverly for delay and discussion,[1] but was told that discussion was prohibited. "So in the end the Germans simply signed, at 6.30 in the evening, half-an-hour late (February 17th)."

The Supreme Council and its naval and military experts went on with the preparation of the final terms. Hunger went on with its work. The legend that Germany's food shortage was a mere mendicant's pose was shattered by the official investigation of an Allied Commission as well as by the reports of Mr. Nevinson and Mr. George Young, in the *Daily News*, and of the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*. Signs were increasing daily of a new crisis in Germany. A general strike movement was spreading, and Spartacism was growing stronger as a result of the food shortage and increase of unemployment.[2]

"Make peace at once or raise the blockade!" This ulti-

[1] Herr Erzberger said that Germany would respect the boundary line for Poland if the Poles would too: said she was ready to carry out the armistice in all points in which she had hitherto not succeeded, but ventured to assume that her obligations would not be interpreted in a manner incompatible with President Wilson's principles; thirdly, raised objection to the Allies' right to terminate the agreement at three days' notice.

[2] The locomotive and railway truck shortage, in consequence of so much transport material having been handed over to the Entente, was one of the chief causes of distress and unemployment in Germany. The difficulties of coal transport were stopping the remaining industries. In February, there were nearly a quarter of a million unemployed in Berlin alone, and the number was increasing daily.

matum was suddenly presented (February 29th) to the Supreme Council by the Economic Council which had been recently formed. It was based on reports made by British officers which revealed the seriousness of the situation in Central Europe.[3] In Bucharest alone there were said to be 250 deaths daily, and as for blockade purposes practically the entire area from the Rhine to the Black Sea was treated as enemy country, the magnitude of the impending disaster was almost immeasurable.

The Supreme War Council read the ultimatum, and attended to it by proceeding immediately to the study of Marshal Foch's final armistice terms—military, naval, and financial. These were so extensive, and, as Mr. Whyte, of the *Daily News,* said, such "an integral part of the foundations on which peace will ultimately rest," that discussion of them lasted for a fortnight. Mr. Lloyd George, who was supported by the American delegation, was so anxious for the disarmament of Germany as a first step towards disarmament generally, that he was dissatisfied with Marshal Foch's proposal to allow the Germans an army of 200,000 men, and insisted upon a further reduction. The *Daily News* (Mr. J. Bell) wrote: "I understand that the British Premier spoke very warmly on this subject, and that after his speech it was readily agreed to postpone the discussion so that a proposal aiming at a still further reduction of armaments could be submitted to the Council. This means a reduction from the 200,000 men a year, which, according to the original plan, were to be left to Germany. The French naturally welcomed the suggestion, and public opinion here to-day is pleased that it should have emanated from the British and not from the French side." "It is an open secret," wrote another *Daily News* correspondent, Mr. A. F. Whyte, "that Mr. Lloyd

[3] See also Mr. Churchill's statement in House of Commons, March 3rd: "We are enforcing the blockade with rigour, and Germany is very near starvation. All the evidence I have received from officers sent by the War Office all over Germany show: firstly, the great privations which the German people are suffering; and, secondly, the danger of a collapse of the entire structure of German social and national life under the pressure of hunger and malnutrition."

George considers disarmament the touchstone of Conference success, and that his insistence on drastic terms for Germany is merely the first step in a general policy of pacification intended to lead to disarmament in all countries.[4] French opinion welcomes the German part of the scheme, but has not yet appreciated the fact that the whole design must stand or fall together.'' Mr. Lloyd George's zeal for the abolition of conscription in Germany had put Mr. Whyte in a very cheerful mood. ''I came over to Paris seven weeks ago,'' he said, ''in a sceptical and pessimistic frame of mind. I foresaw the Conference as a 'lot of wicked old gentlemen with decorations sitting round a green table.' (Sir C. Dilke's description of 'Europe'.) But I was not long here before I knew that Paris, 1919, is not Vienna, 1814. Paris is not exactly creating a new ideal; the Conference is not the *best* that one could have hoped, but it is so much better than one feared, that democrats will do well to close their ranks in support of the good things which the Conference offers rather than waste effort on barren criticism of its faults.''

''There are substantial reasons for believing that the Paris Conference will furnish the foundations of a better Europe. The first of these reasons is that the dominant personalities of the moment are not men of the old régime. President Wilson is the first, and next to him come Clemenceau and Lloyd George, both of them adept readers of public opinion, whose influence in the main is being thrown in favour of the democratic policies which Europe and America desire.''

The *Manchester Guardian* correspondent was less hopeful. ''Nobody can say,'' he wrote (March 10th), ''whether the order that will be established as a result of these anxious weeks will be a blessing or a curse to mankind. Nothing is gained by shutting our eyes to unpleasant facts. If ten

[4] It was unfortunate that on March 3rd, in the House of Commons, Mr. Churchill presented the Army Estimates for the coming year of £440,000,000, twelve times the pre-war cost of the Army, and said that it seemed very unlikely that we should ever fall or ought to fall back to the slender scales of 1914. In March also, the Government's Conscription Bill was introduced into the House of Commons.

men of reasonable capacity were meeting at the Quai d'Orsay day after day, engaged solely on the task of reconstructing the world on the lines of President Wilson's principles, their task would by this time be accomplished. But in actual fact the minds of these ten men are hampered by all kinds of pre-occupations. Pledged to new and revolutionary principles, they are groping about the débris of the old world because they cling to old habits and old standards.

"I was once walking across a stubble field with two dogs, when I noticed that they had stopped dead at a certain point, and were standing rigidly near to one another. I whistled, shouted, cursed, pleaded, but they refused to budge. Each seemed ready to come if only the other would come simultaneously. At last I went back, and found that they were standing on each side of a corpse of a frozen rabbit. That spectacle recalls the attitude of the Great Powers before the war. Unfortunately it is their attitude to-day."

The Supreme War Council went on with its discussion of the final armistice terms to be imposed upon Germany. The question as to the fate of the German Navy bristled with difficulties. The French wanted the lion's share, but it was argued that if the German ships were to be distributed at all among the Allies, Great Britain ought to have more than anyone else because her losses during the war had been the greatest. On the other hand, the Americans pointed out that if Great Britain took a large number, they would be simply obliged to carry out a great naval building programme in order to keep step with her. What *was* to be done with the ships? Should they be scrapped? Would it be a good idea to sink them in mid-ocean? Then nobody would have any and there would be no international jealousy. Could they be converted into transport ships? That would cost too much. Could some of them be used as breakwaters? This suggestion, made in the Press by a mayor of an East Coast town, was regarded as out of the question. The ship would have to be filled with concrete in the first place, but the greatest difficulty would be to sink it in the correct spot. That, in itself, would be an engineering feat of some magnitude, and

unless it were done accurately the result might be to block the port instead of protecting it. The whole problem was exceedingly difficult; the only thing upon which the Supreme Council was agreed was that the ships must, on no account, be given back to Germany.

The Supreme Council were by this time aware of the food situation. The Economic Council had warned them of the danger of letting Central Europe slide into famine and chaos. Negotiations between British and German representatives began at Spa with regard to arrangements for feeding Germany. On March 8th a deadlock was reported. The Allied representatives returned to Paris to report that the Germans refused to hand over their merchant fleet unless their food supply until the next harvest was guaranteed. They appealed on this point to the terms of the first armistice. The Entente representatives referred to the terms of the second armistice and demanded the handing over of the merchant fleet without giving any assurance as to food supplies. Germany "sought to bargain," said the *Times* (March 8th). "She would consent (to hand over the merchant fleet) if the Allies would guarantee her 2,500,000 tons of foodstuffs before the harvest. They naturally decline to give any guarantee of the kind." Is Germany starving? asked the Bishop of Oxford nervously ("The Times," March 11th). Apparently, he said, we had it on evidence of the Commission of our own officers that she was. "The Bishop of Oxford ignores the facts," commented the *Times*. "It is Germany who has broken off the negotiations. If she is so near starvation as she alleges, she will doubtless resume them, but there is much difference of opinion, as our columns have lately shown, on the degree and extent of her present distress, and the declarations made by Dr. Solf and other high German officials in November that famine was then impending have proved misleading and false."

"The rupture of the Spa negotiations is regarded in authoritative quarters with the utmost composure" was reported from Paris on March 10th. But on March 11th it was further reported that the Supreme Council had changed its

opinion and had decided to resume at Brussels the negotiations with the Germans which had been broken off at Spa. A telegram had been received from General Plumer, commanding the British forces on the Rhine, urging that food should be supplied to the suffering population under his eyes in order to prevent the spread of disorder as well as on humanitarian grounds. The most impressive passage in his telegram was that in which he pointed out how bad was the effect produced upon the British Army of the spectacle of the sufferings of German women and children. When the British Prime Minister had finished reading the despatch, he remarked to the Council: "Gentlemen, you cannot say that General Plumer is a pro-German." The Supreme Council thereupon decided that the negotiations should be resumed as quickly as possible with a view to supplying the Germans with food. "The French," said the *Times,* saw that it was better not to run the risk of an irrepressible outbreak of Bolshevism in Germany, which would deprive the Allies of any possibility of obtaining reparation, let alone indemnity." There was joy in Berlin when the news came that the Allies were going to send food into the country. "Many people," said an Exchange telegram, "hoisted the Allied flags as a sign of gratitude."

"A Great Decision" was the title of a leading article in the *Daily News* on this date, March 11th. But it referred, not to the feeding of Germany,[5] but to the Council

[5] The *Daily News,* however, had not neglected to draw public attention to the food question. See its articles, February 24th, March 1st, attacking folly and inhumanity of blockade; see also A.G.G., March 8th. "Policy and Events," i.e., "There is no doubt about these facts. The appalling conditions in Germany are known to all the Allied Governments quite well. They are known, not simply from the evidence of the Germans. They are known from the official investigators who have been in the country for months past, and whose reports are in the hands of the Governments. The nation is perishing from hunger and misery. The semi-starvation of years is being followed by actual starvation deliberately imposed by the Allies months after the enemy have surrendered, have laid down their arms, given up their Navy, disbanded their soldiers, had their railway trucks taken from them and their towns occupied. The

of Ten's decision to require Germany to reduce her standing army to a strength of 100,000 men, to be recruited on a voluntary basis. "That is incomparably the most important concrete step taken by the Conference. It means the end of conscription in Germany, and the end of conscription in Germany should mean and must mean the end of conscription throughout Europe."[6]

"The triumph of the British proposal on the disarmament of Germany, adopted by the Supreme War Council yesterday was complete," wrote Mr. Bell to the *Daily News* March 12th. (The headlines to this report were: No Tanks, Poison Gas, or War Colleges for the Germans.) "Conscription in the German Army under any form whatever is forbidden. It will be an army of volunteers who will serve twelve years." "This, the most concrete result yet reached by the Conference, is taken to mean an end of Conscription in Europe and, as can be imagined, is enthusiastically received."

The German delegates had been summoned to Brussels to learn the decisions of the Supreme Council regarding the German merchant fleet and the supply of food. The meeting was held on March 14th. Admiral Wemyss, the chief British representative, read out the terms as drawn up in Paris, and in order to show very clearly that the surrender of the German mercantile marine was not conditional upon the

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birthrate in the great towns has changed places with the deathrate. It is tolerably certain that more people have died among the civil population from the direct effects of the war than have died on the battlefield. There is no work for there is no material to work with, and no transport even if there were material, for the Allies have stripped the country of the means of transport. In some cases, as much as 90 per cent. of the rolling stock has gone. And now the world is waiting for another turn of the screw; for the latest edition of Marshal Foch's terms; for the latest demands of the Chauvinists of the Paris Press, whose daily cry is for 'more,' and who are quite shocked to find that there is an objection here to handing over the German fleet to the French navy."

[6] This was expressly stated in the clause of the Peace Treaty abolishing conscription in Germany "as a first step towards general disarmament."

supply of food by the Allies, he paused after reading the clause dealing with the surrender of the ships to inquire whether Germany would do this.

After a moment's silence, Herr Braun, head of the German delegation, replied: "Yes, we consent to deliver up the German fleet." Admiral Wemyss then read the rest of the document in which the Allies undertook to supply food upon payment by German exports and securities, and after the deposit of gold in Brussels to the value of £11,000,000. It was stipulated that the food supplies should not go to the unemployed, and there were also clauses to guarantee the resumption of work in Germany. The German delegates who, Reuter reported, "appeared intensely eager to obtain food at all costs," asked for a larger consignment of food, especially of condensed milk, on the ground that child mortality had doubled in Germany during the last three months. They were answered, not quite as Oliver Twist was answered when he asked for "more," they were told that they could not have more milk, but that they would be allowed to buy fish from Norway and to fish in the North Sea. Hitherto they had not been allowed to fish.

This partial lifting of the blockade aroused a great deal of anxiety in France, but M. Pichon reassured his countrymen. At his weekly meeting with journalists (March 16th) he gave an emphatic negative to the question whether the privileges accorded to Germany in respect to the provision of food meant a lifting of the blockade. There could be no question of lifting the blockade, he said, before the conclusion of the preliminary peace. He admitted, however, that the revictualling of Germany would lead to a partial lifting of the blockade in regard to neutral countries.[7] The change of policy

[7] On April 23rd, 1919, the Allies decided to remove the ban upon the exports of merchandise to Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. Regulations against re-export from these countries to Central Europe remained unaltered.

This decision was probably due in large measure to the injury which the blockade of Germany through neutral countries had inflicted upon the Lancashire cotton trade and upon other industries. The *Manchester Guardian* wrote:—

was summed up as follows in the *Nation*, which, with the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily News*, had protested, since the facts became known to them, against the continued blockade.

Nation, March 15. "In the terms of the armistice, accepted by the enemy upon the express understanding that the Allies adopted as the basis of the peace terms Mr. Wilson's Fourteen Points, it was provided that while 'the existing blockade conditions set up by the Allied and Associated Powers are to remain unchanged, the Allies and the United States contemplate the provisioning of Germany during the armistice as shall be found necessary.' Four months have passed. The blockade has not remained unchanged. It has been tightened. New trade restrictions have followed the armed occupation, including the prohibition of fishing in the Baltic. The Allies have not found it necessary to provision Germany. Up to the present time they have continued to 'contemplate' it. They have contemplated it in the face of overwhelming

"Ever since the blockade was made effective the Allies have been extremely anxious to prevent neutrals from diverting any portion of their supplies of food, clothing, or other merchandise to the enemy countries. In Holland an arrangement was made that importers must get their goods through the Netherlands Overseas Trust, which undertook to make certain that no part of them was re-exported to enemy countries. Switzerland set up a similar organisation soon afterwards, and eventually more or less complete safeguards of the same kind were adopted in the other countries with which Germany was able to communicate. This, however, was not considered sufficient; assurance was made doubly sure by rationing the neutrals, allowing them only a percentage of their pre-war imports.

"The consequence has been that Continental manufacturers could not get all the supplies they needed, and some have had to close their mills. It was stated recently that Sweden has £2,000,000 worth of goods in Manchester, which it has not been allowed to import, although the goods have been paid for. Holland, also, has suffered severely. At the same time Lancashire mills were without orders and a great proportion of them are now temporarily closed, while the operatives they usually employ have mostly to depend upon the Government allowance for the means of living. A large trade is waiting—a trade which for a time will relieve the depression very much—but hitherto it has had to be set aside. Now, however, it can be taken up at once."

testimony to wholesale starvation, for which our Press prefers the euphemism of 'under-feeding.' This 'underfeeding' has doubled the mortality for children, old people, and invalids in all the cities, and has kept the whole population in abject misery, aggravated by the stoppage of industries due to the refusal of all importation of materials. Now that some hundreds of thousands of innocent lives have been destroyed by this policy, of which Britain has been the executioner, the Paris statesmen announce with a gesture of magnanimity that they are preparing—not to raise the blockade, but to ration Germany."

The blockade against Germany was not raised, but, beyond the restricted licence to import food upon payment, maintained until a fortnight after the Peace Treaty was signed.[8] Protests from the *Manchester Guardian, Daily News, Nation,* the Fight the Famine Council were unavailing. Germany was allowed after the Spa agreement and upon deposit of £11,000,000 to import food up to 370,000 tons a month provided that she could pay for it. Her ability to pay was, however, hampered by the blockade upon the import of raw materials without which German industries could not be set going to provide the necessary exports. There was a partial relaxation of the restriction on import of raw material on May 15th, "subject to the necessary finance being forthcoming," but the refusal to allow Germany to export gold to neutral countries stood in the way of her benefiting from this relaxation. Owing to these causes, she was not able to import the 370,000 tons of food a month which she was "allowed" to buy. The conditions of underfeeding and the rapid spread of physical and mental diseases continued, and (see chapter 17.) played a large part in the signature of the Peace Treaty.

[8] The Peace Treaty did not become operative until it had been ratified by Germany. The Blockade was continued until this date (July 12th).

16

PERPLEXITIES

PRESIDENT WILSON returned to Paris on March 14th, 1919, the day on which the food agreement was signed at Brussels. He had not had an easy time of it in America. The whole of his energies during his week's stay there had been devoted to the conversion of his fellow-citizens to the acceptance of the draft scheme of the League of Nations. That was why he had been so anxious to have the Draft completed before he left Paris, and he took it back with him to America in order, as he said, to report progress and to show the Americans what he had done. He knew that he would have a good deal of opposition to contend with: it would not be so easy to get the Americans to go into the League as it had been to get them to go into the war. He had been obliged to move slowly in going into the war: there had been the tradition of isolation, of not interfering in the affairs of Europe, to overcome, and as he had been elected to office in 1916 on the ticket of "keep out of the war," he had had to steer his way into it very carefully. Once in the war, it had been plain sailing, all parties entering equally into the spirit of it, but now that the war was over, a great many people thought that there was nothing to be gained by intervening any longer. They did not go into the war, they declared, for the sake of humanity. They went in, they said, to stand by the Allies, because if they had not done so, their turn would have come next. They insisted that America had done its task and must now wash its hands of European affairs.

But Mr. Wilson wanted America to see that it had only just begun its task. The war had shown that it was a world affair, and he knew, as he said, that the arrangements for the

peace could not stand for a generation unless they were guaranteed by the united forces of the civilised world. In that guarantee the United States were, to his mind, the most important factor. America, he said at Boston, in his speech after landing, was "the hope of the world." In Paris, she was regarded as the friend of mankind. Every downtrodden people, every interest looked to her. It was "the most wonderful fact in history." She had brought a new vision to Europe. "Men have testified to me in Europe that our men were possessed by something that they could only call religious fervour," he said. "They were not like any of the other soldiers. They had a vision, they had a dream and they were fighting in a dream; and fighting in a dream they turned the whole tide of battle, and it never came back.[1] If America were to fail the world at this juncture, he said, the result would be unthinkable. "Think of the picture, think of the utter darkness that would fall on the world." "And think of the world that we would leave." "The arrangements of the present peace cannot stand for a generation unless they are guaranteed by the united forces of the civilised world. And if we do not guarantee them, cannot you see the picture? When I think of the homes upon which dull despair would settle if this great hope is disappointed, I should wish, for my part, never to have had America play any part whatever in this attempt to emancipate the world." But, said the President, he had no doubt. He had no more doubt of the verdict of America in this matter than he had doubt of the blood that was in him.

Nevertheless, a good many people remained unconvinced by this moving appeal, and though Mr. Wilson invited the members of the Foreign Relations Committee to dine and discuss with him the Draft scheme of the League, he did not succeed in silencing all criticism. Senator Taft was won over, but Senator Lodge, the leader of the Republican Party in the

[1] The militarist account of the war would hardly have accepted this version of the final Allied offensive. See, for instance, "*Times* Survey of Military Events of 1918," in its "Review of the Year Supplement," January 1st, 1919.

Senate, remained obdurate. He brought forward a resolution in the Senate, signed by thirty-seven Republican members, declaring his conviction that instead of safeguarding the peace of the world, the League of Nations as now planned would engender misunderstanding and strife. He was no friend to Germany—he wanted her chained and fettered—but neither was he a friend of the President. There were, of course, many critics of the League who were moved by purely theoretical objections to the scheme, but a larger number were influenced by party considerations and were glad of any opportunity to discredit their rivals. Moreover, the Monroe Doctrine was very dear to Americans, and they viewed with alarm any scheme limiting their sovereign rights and threw up their hands in horror at the suggestion that the Japanese should be put on a social footing with white peoples.

The fight waxed between the President and his opponents, Democrats as well as Republicans, and Mr. Wilson's pre-war utterances, "Too Proud to Fight" and "Peace Without Victory" were bandied about. However, the President had no doubt that he had won, and, despite a "filibuster" in the Senate, carried on by Republicans, who hoped thereby to enforce an extra session in order to continue their criticism during his absence, he boldly announced that he would not call the new Congress until his return from Paris with the completed Peace Treaty. He left New York on March 5th on his journey back to Paris and, before leaving, he delivered a speech full of confidence, resolution and hope. The *Manchester Guardian* wrote: "Let those open and covert enemies—and there are plenty of them among ourselves and our allies—who rest their hopes on the repudiation by America of the policy of her President—no longer imagine a vain thing." "America is not against a League of Nations: she is wholeheartedly for it." "There is a deep but silent flow of approval for the League" wrote Mr. P. W. Wilson, the *Daily News* American correspondent.

When Mr. Wilson returned to Paris he found the military, naval and air clauses of the final armistice terms waiting for his approval, and discussion of the territorial terms to

be imposed upon Germany going on. These final armistice terms were now being called "preliminary peace" terms, and there was evidently an idea at this time of presenting a "preliminary peace" to Germany in the course of the next two or three weeks. Territorial and reparation clauses were also to be included and the only ground for using the word "preliminary" appeared to be that Germany alone was being dealt with and not her allies—or any outside problems connected with the full Peace settlement.[2] Most cheering statements were issued by the newspapers as to the early date by which this "preliminary" peace would be ready, "Treaty a week to-morrow," "Germany at Versailles in Three Weeks", being headlines in the Press. But there arose the question as to whether the League of Nations Covenant should be inserted in the Preliminary Peace Treaty. Mr. Wilson, with his eye partly, no doubt, upon America and the mischief ripening there, insisted that it should be. He would have no Preliminary Peace Treaty without the Covenant. He was not going to have it shelved until later. That way, it might never get into the Treaty at all, and besides, if it *were* in, there would be no need for the French to claim all the territorial guarantees they were claiming, because the League of Nations would provide them with ample security against future aggression. On the day of his return (March 14th) the President consulted with Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau on certain "outstanding" questions. The French claimed the purely German district of the Saar Valley, with its coalfield. They wanted to make the extensive German territories west of the Rhine into a "buffer" State between themselves and Germany. They wanted to put good, big blocks of German population under the heel of their protégé, Poland. They

[2] The Peace Treaty, as presented to the Germans for signature on May 7th, was entitled "Preliminary." The vestige of the original idea that these Peace Preliminaries coincided with a final armistice agreement was seen in the fact that the Allies notified the German Armistice delegates at Spa, and not the German Government directly, that the treaty was ready for signature, and also in the announcement that, if the Germans refused signature, the third armistice agreement would immediately be denounced and war would again ensue.

demanded that a wide corridor of Polish territory should be driven between East and West Prussia, and that Dantzig, an old and almost purely German seaport, should be given to Poland. They were quite willing to have the League of Nations as an additional or supplementary guarantee, a re-insurance, but they had no intention of accepting it as a substitute for substantial guarantees. "President Wilson considers," said a Central News message from Paris (March 18th), "that the French territorial claims are opposed to the spirit of the League of Nations." "His view is that the League Covenant will obviate the necessity for the territorial securities which France demands, since it obliges all members of the League to come to the assistance of any nation attacked. He fears that if the Preliminary Peace is concluded without the League Covenant, the world's interest in the League would evaporate and the project fail."

"It appears that things are not going quite smoothly in Paris," said the *Manchester Guardian* leader. "There is some friction, differences of view have become more apparent as the decisive moment approaches, the absence for several weeks of some of the chief negotiators has broken the continuity of discussion and new decisions have to be taken under pressure of time, and some of them are momentous. We do not doubt that the difficulties, such as they are, will be got over and that we shall reach a good end, but for this firmness as well as a conciliatory spirit will be needed." The inclusion of the Covenant in the Peace Preliminaries, it said, was vital; and as to leave it out would be fatal, it was pretty safe to assume that it would be in. In this Mr. Wilson "was right and a thousand times right," and the *Guardian* thought he could be trusted to stand firm about it.

Mr. Wilson stood firm; the British delegates' support was won over to him, and it was reported that there had been a meeting of the Supreme Council to consider the military and naval terms, at which the most complete harmony of views prevailed. There was so much anxiety on the part of the Big Four to widen the basis of this harmony and to hasten the settlement that a letter was published from Mr. Wilson and

the French and Italian Premiers to Mr. Lloyd George begging him not to leave Paris until all the essentials of the preliminary peace had been agreed upon. The letter was as follows:—

"Paris, March 17th, 1919.

"Dear Prime Minister,—It seems to us imperative, in order that the world may wait no longer for peace than is actually avoidable, that you should remain in Paris until the chief questions connected with the peace are settled, and we earnestly beg that you will do so. If you can arrange to remain for another two weeks, we hope and believe that this all-important result can be obtained. We write this with a full comprehension of the very urgent matters that are calling you to England and with a vivid consciousness of the sacrifice we are asking you to make.—Sincerely yours,

"Woodrow Wilson,
"G. Clemenceau,
"V. L. Orlando."

It was indeed imperative that the world should wait no longer for peace than was avoidable. Bolshevism with its driving forces of hunger and unemployment was threatening Europe. Not merely the enemy countries and Russia were perishing of famine and the lack of raw material. Every country, friendly or unfriendly, east of the Rhine was suffering under the blockade, which could not be lifted, M. Pichon and others had said, until the Peace Preliminaries were signed. Starvation was stalking over Russia, Poland, Germany, Austro-Hungary, and the Balkans, and to the people in those countries violent revolution seemed the only hope. A Soviet Republic was proclaimed in Hungary,[3] and even

[3] The collapse of Count Karolyi's Liberal Government in Hungary was due to economic conditions and also to the Rumanian and Czech occupation (supported by the Allies) of the Hungarian provinces which they claimed. Mr. Ellis Bartlett's articles in the *Daily Telegraph* at this date exposed the folly of the Allied policy and the way in which it had reduced Austro-Hungarian affairs to anarchy. See also article in *Manchester Guardian,* March 29th, "What Hungary means; the Council of Ten and Bolshevism; How they have set it on its feet."

in Paris there began to be fears that the progress of anarchy and revolution would bring the Conference to naught. The Great Powers were alarmed; they announced that they were going to make a great effort to have the treaty ready in a week's time. In order to hasten matters, the Council of Ten was replaced by the Council of Four, and it was authoritatively stated (March 25th) that practically all the terms of the Treaty had been formulated, and that all that Messrs. Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Orlando, and Wilson had to do in the next few days was to consider their final shape. Official reports, from day to day, continued to assure a by now somewhat anxious public that satisfactory progress was being made, a German Finance Minister was invited to Versailles (March 26th), but April 1st arrived, the Big Four's fortnight[4] was up, and still the outstanding questions remained unsettled. Other questions, the Hungarian Revolution, the Dantzig landing, Russia, were breaking in on the main discussion, yet everyone knew that the race between Peace and Anarchy was growing more desperate. Germany, it was reported ("Daily News," March 31st), was "flirting" with Bolshevism—the "Frankfurter Zeitung" was openly advocating a Russian alliance—and the German refusal to allow the Allies to land a Polish army at Dantzig was looked upon as an omen of her possible refusal to sign the Treaty when it was ready.[5]

[4] See letter from Messrs. Wilson, Clemenceau, Orlando, to Mr. Lloyd George, pressing him to stay another fortnight in Paris, by which time the writers hoped and believed that everything would be settled.

[5] Her refusal was undoubtedly a breach of the armistice (November 11), Clause 16 of which had given the Allies free access via Dantzig and the Vistula, for the maintenance of order, in the territories of the former Russian Empire, but the Germans, having learnt that the Allies were proposing to take Dantzig and a strip of predominantly German territory all round it away from them to give it to Poland, were afraid that a Polish landing at Dantzig would be the beginning of an annexation, which they were determined to resist. In the negotiations at Spa between Marshal Foch and the Germans which arose out of this protest, the Germans by securing an assurance that the Poles were not landing in order to stay, undoubtedly gained their point, to the horror of the *Times* which pointed out (April 7) what a bad precedent it was for the final

The Russian question was so difficult that nothing had been done about it. M. Pichon stated (*Daily Express*, March 17) that since the "Prinkipo fiasco," Russian affairs had been "steadily avoided by the Council of Ten." The Prinkipo proposal had been a "fiasco" because the Russian Government had accepted it, but now that Hungary had turned to Russia and other countries were looking in that direction it was felt, even by the Big Four, that something must be done. The Allied policy—or absence of policy—had evidently done Bolshevism more good than harm. M. Pichon was rampant about it, and so was the *Times*. It insisted upon a Russian policy and backed M. Pichon. "We must support much more energetically than we have done the various armies in Russia which are fighting for the rights of her people. . . . This is a fairly full programme, and if we carry it out with vigour it will, by preventing the expansion of Bolshevism, bring about its fall" (March 28th). All sorts of rumours were current: the Big Four themselves were reported to be coquetting with Russia, considering the possibility of terms with Lenin. Nothing was officially announced, but news leaked out. Mr. Wilson Harris, of the *Daily News*, wrote a good deal about it (March 31-April 1) and the *Times* had front page articles on the "Playing with Bolshevism" that was going on. "It is now generally known in Paris," its Paris correspondent wrote (the *Times*, April 3) "that the idea of a shameful 'deal' with the Bolshevists on the basis of some form of Allied and American recognition of the Lenin-Trotsky 'Government,' in return for economic, commercial and financial concessions, very nearly found acceptance in influential circles here last week. That idea was fortunately scotched in the nick of time, but it is by no means killed and is at present lurking underground." The *Times* attributed all delays in preparing the Peace terms

peace discussions. "It is bound to strengthen those Germans who plead for a real peace by negotiation when summoned to Versailles." "More than one writer in the French Press points out the moral dangers which are likely to arise from this further weakening in the Allied attitude towards the enemy."

to the fact that the Council of Four were "wasting time in a vain attempt to reconcile the pro-German and pro-Bolshevist proclivities of some of their number with the requirements of a sound and lasting peace."

The Big Four were daily reported to be going on with their "Private Peace Hustle," but peace still "lagged." The "difficult" questions of Dantzig and the Saar coalfield were still being discussed. Over and over again it was reported that the four statesmen were conferring in complete harmony, and that the problems of the Rhine frontier and the Sarr basin had been "solved." The *Daily News* reported (April 3) that M. Clemenceau had "come round" to the views of Mr. Lloyd George and the President, which were that France should have the coal but not the territory, and that the buffer state idea should be given up in favour of a "military neutralisation" of the territory in question (i.e., by an Allied occupying army). But the semi-official French papers continued to press the full French claims[6]—in a debate in the French Chamber, the frontiers of 1814 were demanded, and this did not look as if the matters were "solved."

Another problem which was a cause of delay was that of Reparations. Violent conflict of opinion had been going on for some time as to how much and how Germany should pay. All the available sources of German wealth were being assessed by experts and non-experts, with a view to confiscation by the Allies, who could neither agree in their respective estimates nor as to the allotment of reparation among them-

[6] "Pertinax," in the *Echo de Paris*, was the most explicit on this question of "Il faut maintenir l'Occupation de la Rive Gauche du Rhin." "There is only one effective guarantee—that is permanent occupation," he declared (April 7). "It was," he said, "the business of the Allies to exercise over a long period of years the most active control over the affairs of Europe. Our alliance ought, in short, to accomplish on an incomparably larger scale what we, the French, have accomplished in Morocco, pursuing a policy at the same time military and economic, combining arms and diplomacy, never hesitating to display force whenever necessary in order to avoid having to employ it constantly."

selves. There was also great difference of opinion concerning the future of German industry. Should Germany, after the Peace, be allowed to resume her industrial activities? The French said "No!" decidedly, but the Americans and British inclined to the view that if Germany were not allowed to work she would be unable to pay her debts. On the top of all this, there was the fate of the Balkans undecided,[7] and the Chino-Japanese question, in which China's claim to self-determination and Japan's claim to Jap-determine China could not be reconciled. The Italians, moreover, were becoming restive over Fiume and had already threatened to leave Paris if Fiume were not awarded to them. The enemy countries were growing hungrier and more desperate, and people were shocked to hear that General Smuts had been mobbed by starving children in Vienna.

A cloud of depression fell upon the spirits of Liberal journalists in Paris. The *Manchester Guardian* correspondent, who had never shared the optimism of his editor, wrote almost in despair. He pointed to the conditions in Central Europe and asked: "What if the Conference collapsed—and a permanent condition of anarchy—neither war nor peace—ensued?" "The Peace Conference," he said, "looks every day more like the abortive effort to end the Peloponnesian War, which ended in treaties which nobody kept. There is no sense of authority, of finality, of decision. The world is moving fast to the left and here a little group of men quarrel over the formulæ and conventions of an age that seems already distant and remote.

"As a spectacle there is something fascinating in this gigantic unreality. It will make a great page for a Gibbon a century hence. Men will try to write this history like Thucydides as they survey a world in which men seemed to have overcome every obstacle to their power except their own passions. Even now and here, as the onlookers go to bed

[7] A Commission was sitting to deal with the Balkans, but very little was known about their findings beyond the fact that "the signal ability of M. Venizelos has been successful in securing large accessions of territory for Greece." See *Daily News*, March 25.

night after night sick with despair or anger, their feelings are relieved by a strange curiosity about the fifth act that is still before us."

"FRENCH ANNEXATIONISTS.

"We were told on Saturday on high authority that every important question was practically settled. But that does not mean that there is even a single question which may not have to be settled over again. The *Temps* said two days ago that the French Government have disclaimed any annexationist ideas about the Saar valley. *L'Œuvre* states to-day that this announcement has astonished the diplomats, and that it is not true.

"The facts are, I believe, that the Council of Four decided that France should have the coal and not the territory. The Committee of Three has prepared a scheme, or possibly a series of alternative schemes, to give effect to this decision, but it is clear that a question like this may be presented under such a variety of aspects that the original decision may prove to have contributed very little to a practical solution.

"Thus it is that we sometimes find in the morning that a question is settled, and in the afternoon it is still open. This applies not only to these complicated issues but to executive acts. It is possible that somebody knows at this moment whether the Council of Four meant yesterday to send a commission to Syria. Nobody knows what their mind will be to-morrow.

"M. Dutasta is making arrangements for the ceremony at Versailles, and some of us have visited the Galerie des Glaces. I could not take much interest in the preparations when I thought of the interminable discussions that have to be concluded before the Germans are summoned. But I wanted to stand once more in the Jeu de Paume, and as I stood there I wished that the Council of Four would take an oath refusing to separate till they had given the world peace."

The Paris discussions about the Saar, the Rhine frontier and Dantzig did not interest the majority of English people. Lord Northcliffe was diverting public opinion by offer-

ing a £10,000 prize for an Atlantic flight. But there was one part of the Peace Treaty in which the British House of Commons was interested, and that was the Indemnity. Mr. Lloyd George's supporters gave him no peace on this subject and were continually reminding him of his election pledges. Mr. Bonar Law had a worrying time in the House. On April 8 he flew to Paris to consult with his chief, because, during the last few days, 24 M.P.'s (the *Daily Express* said 370) had been busy drafting an urgent telegram to the Prime Minister in Paris, urging him to insist that the full cost of the war should be demanded from Germany, whether she could pay or not. The Northcliffe and Bottomley Press were hot in support: the French Press joined in—and the French annexation and occupation claims were thus invested with a motive, congenial to English opinion, i.e., that German territory must be occupied until the last sou had been paid.

The situation grew tenser: Mr. Wilson's Reminder,[8] April 8, that the Fourteen Points were being forgotten caused no surprise and had no effect; and the frantic discussion over the "outstanding questions" and the Indemnity went on. The Northcliffe Press reminder that the Election pledges were being forgotten was more influential. The *Times* reported, April 9, that, as a result of the "vigorous massage" Mr. Lloyd George had recently undergone, he was now "keeping a straight bat" and "playing the game in a firm, straightforward way."[9] "There are indications," said the *Paris Daily Mail,* "that Mr. Lloyd George is now awakening to the fact that his unstable and eccentric policy has carried him right away from the line followed by the mass of public opinion in England." On April 14 (exactly

[8] On April 8, it was reported that Mr. Wilson had dramatically ordered his ship, the "George Washington," to be sent from Brooklyn to Brest forthwith. His position, it was stated in the Liberal Press, was that the peacemakers must get back to the Fourteen Points and the terms of the Armistice which "he felt had recently been disregarded." The "George Washington" arrived in answer to the summons, but the President remained in Paris.

[9] Mr. Lloyd George had previously tended to support Mr. Wilson's opposition to the French claims.

a month after Mr. Lloyd George had been begged by his colleagues to stay in Paris on the understanding that the Treaty would be ready in a fortnight), it was reported that the Saar valley and left bank of the Rhine problems had been virtually settled. M. Clemenceau announced on the same day that the Reparations question had also been settled "on a basis very satisfactory to France." "These happy results," he added, "have not been obtained without great difficulties." The next day Mr. Lloyd George left Paris for London, and in response to a request for a message regarding the work accomplished by the Conference, replied:—

"All has gone well and still goes well. You may say that I am very well satisfied with what has been achieved and that M. Clemenceau also is eminently satisfied."

The French Press generally expressed high gratification at the Saar valley settlement, which had been given a form distinctly favourable to France. France was to have the coal in perpetuity. It was to count as part of the German indemnity. The territory was to be severed entirely from Germany and given some kind of autonomy under the League of Nations, with a preponderating voice for France on the administrative body. The inhabitants themselves were to have what Mr. Wilson Harris, of the *Daily News*, called a twenty per cent. self-determination; that is to say, they were to have one representative out of five in the Governing body. A plebiscite at the end of fifteen years was to be taken, and if it resulted in favour of Germany, the Germans were to be compelled to buy the coal pits back from France, though the coal itself was to be France's, in perpetuity.

There was not quite the same degree of exultation over the decision regarding the left bank of the Rhine. The occupation, apparently, was only to be for a period of years, whereas the French wanted a more permanent arrangement. "Having reached the Rhine, we must stay there," said Marshal Foch, in an interview with Mr. Ward Price, in the *Times* of April 19. "Impress that upon your countrymen. It is our only safety. Their only safety. We must have

a barrier. We must doublelock the doors. Democracies like ours, which are never aggressive, must have strong natural military frontiers. Remember that those seventy millions of Germans will always be a menace to us. We must have our armies on the Rhine."

"Reparations—on French Lines"—so ran the headlines in the Liberal newspapers. "M. Clemenceau announces success after a hard fight." "A good deal is being said in the French Press," said Mr. Wilson Harris (*Daily News*, April 14), "of the decision to make Germany pay £1,000,000,000 almost immediately on account. I am not disposed to take these specific figures too seriously. It is very doubtful whether they will appear in the Peace Treaty at all,[10] and, in any case, the Allies, when it comes to the point, are not likely to commit the abysmal folly of calling on Germany for sums it is altogether beyond her power to pay."

The *Times* took the matter more seriously. On April 21, it enumerated the list of categories of damages for which reparation was going to be exacted. Its Paris correspondent wrote:—

"This list covers damage done to private property, both on land and sea, by artillery or aircraft bombardment, by voluntary or involuntary action of troops, including billeting, by defensive or offensive action, the flooding of land, for instance, by torpedo or submarine mine, by the digging of land, felling of trees, requisitions of expropriations. The property thus covered includes land, forests, orchards, plantations, mineral deposits, mines, quarries, roads, canals, railways, electric lines and conduits, telephone, telegraph, power or water pipes, drains and works of all kinds, private and public buildings, other than those belonging to the State, monuments, and artistic property.

"Reparation will be demanded for damage done to private property in enemy and Allied countries by enemy seizure, sequestrations, and liquidation of sequestrated property. The enemy will be called upon to make good damage done by forced sales, confiscations, theft of contents of private and public buildings other

[10] They did appear in Peace Treaty.

than those belonging to the State, of machinery, tools, furniture, clothes, linen, and all personal effects, of works of art, raw and manufactured materials, merchandise, livestock, crops, food, drawings, models, patents, trade marks, records, archives, merchant vessels, fishing boats, as well as their freights and cargoes.

"Miscellaneous interests included in the list as being entitled to reparation comprise damage to shares and securities, expenditure incurred by any public body other than the State in relieving or transporting the inhabitants of invaded or occupied territories, injury caused to industrial property by the discovery or the use of special processes of manufacture, patents, or special methods, losses to trade caused by the disclosure of private business documents, and loss caused by deprivation, through enemy action, of revenue and opportunity to work.

"The enemy will have to make good damage done by his financial exactions, by the destruction or disappearance of currency, by taxes, war fines, levies, thefts of currency, including bank deposits, and forced subscriptions obtained from individuals and corporations, also damage resulting from forging by the enemy of bank-notes, bonds, or any other kind of currency.

"PERSONAL INJURIES.

"Perhaps the most interesting portion of this long catalogue is that which defines the extent of German liability for damage done to civilians in their persons. Civilians who have been wounded or in any way harmed in their life or health by land, sea, or air bombardment will be entitled to reparation, and, in case of death, the claim of their next-of-kin will be recognised.

"The following categories of civilians or next-of-kin will also be entitled to reparation: Those who have suffered cruelty, violence, or maltreatment at the hands of the enemy or on his instructions, who have been shot or put to death, or who have died as the result of ill-treatment, those who have been exposed by the enemy to the fire of Allied troops, those who have suffered in life or in health from imprisonment, deportation, internment, or evacuation, those who have suffered accidental death or injury or who have become ill as the result of enforced labour, those who have suffered from acts injurious to their honour, those who have been forced to engage

in any occupation contrary to the interest of their country without having suffered any injury.

"It will be good news to those civilians who have suffered in internment camps in enemy countries that their claims to reparation have not been forgotten, and that damage resulting from injury to life or capacity to work of interned civilians will rank for compensation. Those Allied civilians who have suffered owing to explosions in war factories in Allied or enemy countries outside of every theatre of operations will also see their claims for reparation recognised.

"In the clauses of this report dealing with damage to State interests there is more than one reservation, but there is universal agreement on the right to reimbursement for pensions, allowances, and bonuses of every kind to military sufferers in the war—or persons claiming on their behalf, such as widows, orphans, and relatives of those killed, mutilated, sick, or discharged for ill-health from the Army—as well as to prisoners of war who have suffered in their health from acts of violence or ill-treatment. The cost of relief given to prisoners of war by the State, and allowances to families of men called to the Colours will also be admitted, as well as the expenses of the maintenance of enemy prisoners of war and interned civilians."

"The financial mechanism of the Peace Treaty," this article concluded, "is very vast and complicated." All the range of feasible numbers and all the letters of the alphabet had, long ago, it was stated, been used up in labelling the clauses and sub-clauses.

The Allies invited the Germans to send their representatives to Versailles on April 25. They were told to be prepared to sign the Peace Treaty on May 10, the anniversary of the signing of the Frankfurt Treaty in 1871. "The Germans," said Reuter, "will not be allowed to discuss the territorial and military conditions which they will have to accept as they are, *en bloc,* but they may, perhaps, be permitted to offer suggestions regarding the ways and means of carrying out the financial and economic terms."

The German Government replied to the invitation, saying that they would send representatives to Versailles to receive the Peace terms and take them back to Weimar. "Ger-

man Nonentities for Paris." "Allies refuse to receive mere messengers—a typical German manœuvre which will meet with no success," said the *Daily News*. "Latest Enemy Trick," said the *Times*. "Prompt Allied Reply: Plans to Enforce Terms." "Marshal Foch, General Sir H. Wilson and General Bliss have completed their plans for action in case the Germans prove unwilling to carry out the programme as requested. This announcement may help the Germans to come into line."

The Germans, of course, came into line. There was nothing else for them to come into. Count Brockdorf-Rantzau and the other members of the German delegation were given "plenary powers," but the German Government still insisted upon its right to negotiate. The audacity of this demand was lost sight of in a sudden Conference Rupture which was announced (April 24). The Italian delegates left Paris as a result of the declaration made by President Wilson on the Adriatic question.

The Big Four had been struggling with this problem for the last fortnight, but Signor Orlando had been obdurate. He demanded Fiume; nothing less than Fiume would satisfy him. He could not have Fiume, said President Wilson. For one thing, Fiume was never awarded to Italy by the Pact of London, and, for another, the Fourteen Points were violated by the Italian demands on Fiume and Dalmatia. Fiume must belong to Jugo-Slavia, which the Allies, in their wisdom, had set up as an independent State. The Peace *must* square with the Fourteen Points. President Wilson appealed to the Italian nation to see that they must.

But Signor Orlando could not see it. Why should Italy have to agree to the Fourteen Points when no one else had agreed with them? She had long ago taken the precaution of occupying Fiume and she was not going to surrender it. Besides, said the Italian Premier, Italy's claims *were* in accordance with the Fourteen Points, and President Wilson had no business to deny this. He should go home to tell his people. He went home and his people rapturously applauded him. D'Annunzio declared that he was never prouder of being

Italian. "Of all our splendid hours," he said, "this surely is the most solemn. There is nothing greater in the world than this. Italy remaining fearlessly alone against everybody. Italy is great and pure, and I say to her: 'Don't surrender an inch.'" The British Liberal Press were horrified at the behaviour of Italy. It must have been shameless, they thought, for the President to have been forced to speak out about it. "Such a step," said the *Daily News,* "would clearly never have been taken except as a last resource after the failure of all private negotiations. What will follow it would be idle to speculate. What is clear now is that the two antagonistic principles which have been in more or less veiled conflict throughout the deliberations of the Conference have met in a death-grapple. One or the other must now yield, and the defeat will in all probability be final." It might have been supposed from this and other similar comments in the Liberal Press that the "more or less veiled conflict throughout the deliberations of the Conference" had so far been favourable to the principle which was now meeting its antagonist in a death-grapple, or that its triumph on this "decisive" occasion would reverse the consequences of the previous veiled struggles. The Peace Treaty in its main features was already known to everyone. From that knowledge, possessed equally by Liberal and Conservative journalists, what was clear was that the Fourteen Points had been, throughout the deliberations of the Conference, so disregarded that to invoke them just as the curtain was to rise upon the last act was farcical.

"The feeling that the task of setting the world straight is beyond the capacity of the Peace Conference, which has haunted the mind of speculators for some weeks, is particularly strong to-day," wrote the Paris correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian.* The news from Italy was not encouraging. Signor Orlando was being acclaimed in Rome, and the Japanese were threatening to follow Italy's example, if they could not have Shantung. More secret agreements had suddenly come to light, and Japan was insisting upon the fulfilment of these in much the same way as Italy was standing by the Pact of London. The Belgians were also expressing

"grave dissatisfaction" with their treatment under the Reparation clauses, and the French were still demanding more substantial guarantees.

Japan was luckier than Italy; her Treaty rights were recognized by the Big Three. But the trouble with Italy was reported to have blown over sufficiently to enable Signor Orlando to return. The Fourteen Points were not mentioned again by anyone except by the Germans, who had arrived at Versailles and were threatening to leave too if the peace terms were not presented to them quickly. In order, possibly, to prevent this, and also to keep them distinct from the townspeople, a barbed-wire fence was erected on either side of the street with a barrier near the entrance of the hotel where they were housed. They were told that serious note would be taken of any infringement of the fence regulations.

The treaty was now ready (May 2); it had been drafted, and was said to consist of a volume of 350 pages. The Big Three were busy putting the final touches to it. A Secret Plenary Session was held on May 6, at which the terms were communicated to all the Allied delegates. According to Mr. John Bell (*Daily News*) this was not by any means an harmonious gathering. The Treaty did not please everybody. There were strong objections from the Chinese against the handing over of Shantung to Japan. Marshal Foch was also reported to have made an impressive speech in the course of which he said that the security given to France was inadequate from the military standpoint, and his personal conviction was that the Treaty should not be signed.

The ceremony of presenting the terms to the Germans took place on May 7, the fourth anniversary, as the Press was careful to notice, of the sinking of the "Lusitania." Forty-eight years before, A. G. G., of the *Daily News*, solemnly pointed out, the Germans had been at Versailles on another errand. The contrast between their position then and now was an irresistible text for a sermon. The Peace Treaty in its main features was already known to everyone. Upon the publication of its summary, on May 8, Mr. Wilson Harris wrote: "The Treaty contains no surprises. It includes, I think,

practically nothing that has not been announced at one time or other in the columns of the *Daily News.*" But Liberal editors preferred to keep up the illusion that the world was waiting in suspense to know its fate. They still refused to believe that a new spirit was not going to be born. They could not bring themselves to admit that their hopes had been altogether defeated. There had been disappointments, compromises, they acknowledged, but still their ideals had had, as it were, a look in. The Germans had been defeated. Prussian militarism had been overthrown. The Empire that Bismarck had founded was, as A. G. G. said, "one with Nineveh and Tyre." Was it possible that the "unprecedented opportunity for taking advantage of this stupendous overthrow was going to be wasted? Surely, it was not possible; it could not be that the Germans were back at Versailles merely that they should receive tit for tat." The Allies' "tit" was going to be a new dispensation. All these five years the Liberals had been sublimely confident of that. They were not going to give up either their sublimity or their confidence until they were absolutely forced. A good deal of the treaty was bad, perhaps, or at any rate not so good as it might have been, but was not the Covenant of the League of Nations embodied in it? Thank God! cried A. G. G., that this was so. "Thank God for the great man and the great nation that have made it possible it should be so. When I reflect on the sort of 'top-dog' peace of Versailles that would have been enacted but for the glorious work of President Wilson and the American nation I feel that I could join in the Song of Pippa as she passes with the assurance that she is magnificently right. But I check the impulse. I reserve my cheers. It is a long way to Tipperary yet. The plan is sublime . . . but it is only a plan."

The reserve was a wise one. The Song of Pippa would have been discordant at Versailles. Those who believed in the ideal war aims were as powerless as the Germans were, waiting behind barbed wire to receive the Allied terms. Both were supplicants for the fulfilment of promises that had been made. Both appealed for justice and were disappointed. The *Daily News* wrote, on the day that the terms were to be presented

(May 7) "The world looks to the Peace terms to express the high resolve with which the Allies embarked on the war and conceded the armistice. Its conscience demands justice, but equally it repudiates revenge. It will not tolerate, and in the end it will not ratify a wrong. It will not ratify anything that repeats in the judgment of Versailles to-day the spirit of the crime of the judgment of Versailles in 1871. It asks for the clean peace, a peace that is clean through and through, that leaves no poison in the blood of the world and no injustice to sow the seeds of more wars of vengeance." Count Brockdorf-Rantzau's petition on this momentous occasion was not less disregarded than the Liberal appeal.

17

THE LAST ACT

THE Peace Treaty was handed to the German plenipotentiaries at the Trianon Palace Hotel, Versailles, at three in the afternoon of March 7. The proceedings were described on the official paper as a "Conference." Those who were present said that it was more like the closing scene of a trial. Round the room, at rectangularly-arranged tables, sat the representatives of an outraged world. The Germans, six of them, sat at a small table at the far end, immediately opposite the Big Three. Mr. Lloyd George beamed, M. Clemenceau glared, and Mr. Wilson avoided the eye of Count Brockdorf-Rantzau.[1]

"The time has come," said M. Clemenceau, addressing the prisoners, "when we must settle our account. You have asked for peace. We are ready to give you peace. We shall present to you now a book which contains our conditions." No oral discussion, he said, was to be allowed; the German delegation must submit any observations they had to make in writing (French and English); fifteen days' grace was given them in which to decide upon signature.

As soon as M. Clemenceau had finished speaking, the Treaty was handed to Count Brockdorf-Rantzau, who received it, it was said, without changing a muscle. Remaining seated, he delivered a long speech, beginning:—

"Gentlemen, we are deeply impressed with the sublime task which has brought us hither to give a durable peace to the world. We are under no illusion as to the extent of our

[1] Count Brockdorf-Rantzau told this to a friend of mine. He said: "Mr. Lloyd George nodded to us assuringly, and looked like a benevolent old gentleman; Mr. Wilson avoided my eye all the time."—I.C.W.

defeat and the degree of our want of power. We know that the power of the German arms is broken. We know the power of the hatred which we encounter here, and we have heard the passionate demand that the victors shall make us pay as the vanquished, shall punish those who deserve punishment.

"It is demanded of us that we shall confess ourselves to be the only ones guilty of the war. Such a confession in my mouth will be a lie. We are far from declining any responsibility for this great world war having come to pass, and for its having been made in the way in which it was made. The attitude of the former German Government at the Hague Peace Conference, its actions and omissions in the tragic twelve days of July, certainly contributed to the disaster, but we energetically deny that Germany and its people, who were convinced that they were making a war of defence, were alone guilty.

"Nobody will want to contend that the disaster took its course only in the disastrous moment when the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary fell the victim of murderous hands. In the last fifty years the imperialism of all the European States has chronically poisoned the international situation. The policy of retaliation and the policy of expansion and the disregard of the rights of peoples to determine their own destiny have contributed to the illness of Europe, which reached its crisis in the world war.

"The Russian mobilisation took from the statesmen the possibility of healing and gave the decision into the hands of the military powers.

"Public opinion in all the countries of our adversaries is resounding with the crimes which Germany is said to have committed in the war. Here also we are ready to confess the wrong that may have been done. We have not come here to belittle the responsibility of the men who have waged the war politically and economically and to deny any crimes which may have been committed against the rights of peoples.

"We repeat the declaration made in the German Reich-

stag at the beginning of the war, that is to say, 'a wrong has been done to Belgium and we are willing to repair it.'

"But in the manner of making war also Germany is not the only guilty party. I do not want to answer reproaches by reproaches, but I ask them to remember when reparation is demanded not to forget the armistice. It took six weeks till we got it at last and six months till we came to know your conditions of peace. Crimes in war may not be excusable, but they are committed in the struggle for victory and in the defence of national existence, and passions are aroused which make the conscience of peoples blunt.

"The hundreds of thousands of non-combatants who have perished since November 11 by reason of the blockade were killed with cold deliberation, after our adversaries had conquered and victory had been assured to them. Think of that when you speak of guilt and of punishment.

"The measure of guilt of all those who have taken part can only be stated by impartial inquest before a neutral commission, before which all the principal persons of the tragedy are allowed to speak and to which all the archives are open. We have demanded such an inquest, and we repeat this demand again at this Conference, where we stand facing our adversaries alone and without any Allies.

"We are not quite without protection. You yourselves have brought us an ally, namely, the right which is guaranteed by the Treaty, by the principles of the peace.

"The Allied and Associated Governments forswore in the time between October 5 and November 5, 1918, a peace of violence and wrote a 'Peace of Justice' on their banner. On October 5, 1918, the German Government proposed the principles of the President of the United States of America as the basis of Peace, and on November 5 their Secretary of State, Mr. Lansing, declared that the Allied and Associated Powers agreed to this basis, with two definite deviations. The principles of President Wilson have thus become binding for both parties to the war—you as well as for us, and also for our former allies."

Count Brockdorf-Rantzau went on to say that Germany

considered the reparation to Belgian and French territory a "solemn obligation," but urged that the work should not be done by German prisoners of war. He concluded by referring to the League of Nations as a sublime thought, but added, "Only if the gates of the League are thrown open to all who are of good-will can the aim be attained, and only then the dead of this war will not have died in vain. The German people in their hearts are ready to take upon themselves their heavy lot if the bases of peace which have been established are not any more shaken. The peace which cannot be defended in the name of right before the world always calls for the new resistances against it. Nobody will be capable of subscribing to it with a good conscience, for it will not be capable of fulfilment."

"RANTZAU'S INSOLENCE": "REPUDIATION OF SOLE WAR GUILT": "COUNTERCHARGE OF CRUELTY THROUGH ACTION OF BLOCKADE." These were some of the headlines in the next day's English newspapers. The French Press was largely taken up with the attitude of Count Brockdorf-Rantzau in remaining seated [2] while delivering his speech. It was, moreover, noted that he came to the Trianon Palace Hotel smoking a cigarette which, it was said, he threw into a group of Allied officers before ascending the steps. Another observation was that the paper cutter placed on the table in front of him was found to be broken after he left. "Tactless!" "Outrageous!" These comments, said the newspapers, represented the British official view of the speech. President Wilson was said to be "greatly surprised" at the chief German delegate's attitude and tone.

On the Peace Treaty itself there was considerable divergence of opinion. The *Daily News* reported that, speaking generally, the following comments roughly represented the feeling of the various countries:—

Great Britain.—The terms are stringent, but are far less drastic than a victorious Germany would have imposed. Strong hopes are based on the League of Nations.

[2] His own explanation was that he remained seated because he felt too shaky to stand.

France.—An honourable compromise. The proposed Anglo-American guarantee[3] is a source of great satisfaction.

America.—Severe but just. German military power is finally broken. The guarantee to France may cause a big fight in Congress, but the average American now realises that he is heavily involved in European affairs for years to come.

Italy.—Germany will sign.

The views of some well-known men were expressed as follows:—

Prof. Gilbert Murray.—Inevitably the Treaty retains the sting of war and a challenge to a new war. The only hope for true peace lies in the gradual healing power of the League of Nations. Can we rise to it?

Dr. Clifford.—It is a splendid beginning. No State is completely satisfied, but all States will be grateful and hopeful. It does not abolish militarism, but it organises the world's peace makers, protects the backward races, and is on the whole a triumph of justice.

Mr. J. R. Clynes.—The terms are less stringent than Germany, if successful, would have imposed upon us. The apportionment of German territory other than Alsace-Lorraine will be dangerous for our future unless adjustment is arranged through a League of Nations.

Mr. Philip Snowden.—The Treaty should satisfy brigands, Imperialists and militarists. It is the death-blow to the hopes of those who expected the end of the war to bring peace. It is not a Peace Treaty, but a declaration of another war. It is the betrayal of democracy and of the fallen in the war. The Treaty exposes the true aims of Allies.

Mr. Will Crooks, M.P.—We get no more than we de-

[3] On the evening of May 7, the following official communique was issued in Paris: "In addition to the securities offered in the Treaty of Peace, the President of the United States of America has pledged himself to propose to the Senate of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain has pledged himself to propose to the Parliament of Great Britain, an engagement, subject to the approval of the Council of the League of Nations, to go immediately to the assistance of France in the case of an unprovoked attack by Germany."

serve to have. The Germans are much better treated than they would have treated us.

Sir Donald Maclean, M.P.—It is a great satisfaction at long last to have something definite as the result of the long-drawn-out, but probably unavoidable, pourparlers. I cannot commit myself to any criticism without fuller consideration of the articles, which at the moment are not before Parliament.

The *Daily News* itself went beyond the cautious Asquithianism of Sir D. Maclean, its *pro tem.* leader in the Commons. It was terribly disappointed, and it did not shrink from saying so. It rejoiced, of course, that the security against Prussianism (in Germany) was so stringent. "Her Army is disbanded, her Navy is taken from her, her forts are razed, her manufacture of armaments beyond a trivial scale is prohibited, her sources of power are halved, her territory is to be occupied for fifteen years, her economic freedom is subjected to rigorous restraints. She is not only disarmed, she is handcuffed and in irons from top to toe. With these provisions in themselves no fault can be found. Germany appealed to force and must accept judgment in the terms of the tribunal to which she appealed." But. . . ! But. . . ! But. . . ! There were so many "buts" that the *Daily News* was in difficulties.

"The destruction of Prussianism must not be limited to Germany." How often had the *Daily News* had to say that! "Militarism is not the enemy in Germany alone," it reiterated. "It is the enemy everywhere, and it must be destroyed everywhere or it will be destroyed nowhere. . . . What of France? What of Great Britain? What of Italy? What of Japan? We cannot have the world half slave and half free as Lincoln said."

But . . . what about the economic and financial terms? "The plain fact is that we demand both the golden eggs and the corpse of the goose that would lay them." "If Germany is to pay she must pay with her future labour, and if that labour is to be effective it must be conducted in a spirit of hope and with the feeling that the task is compassable and

just. She must have money to buy raw materials, a reasonable market for her exports, and facilities for that trade without which she cannot pay her debts. But we propose to take her money and her mercantile marine, the first essentials of her power of production. She not only surrenders her ships; but she is kept at work building 200,000 tons of shipping a year to replace our losses. It is just enough that she should replace our losses; but the point here is that we cannot have it both ways. We cannot have both her goods and her money, for her goods are her potential money. This, however, is not all. By the concessions of territory she loses one-third of her coal and *three-quarters of her iron*, not to speak of enormous losses of zinc and other metals which are the raw material of her industry. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that she is first stripped naked and then told to turn out her pockets. She may consent under the stress of the necessity of peace to undertake the double operation, but we fancy there will be some difficulty in making her perform it. She will certainly have no help in the task. Every discrimination is against her. France is to be permitted to send in her goods, duty free; but France is at liberty to put up any tariff she likes against German goods. Is it really supposed that these sort of conditions should stand or can stand? And while Germany is to surrender her Boxer indemnities there is no sign that we are prepared to do the same act of justice and generosity to our Far-Eastern Ally."

There was no space for comment, said the *Daily News*, on many other phases of the Treaty, the trial of the Kaiser, the complete exclusion of Germany from the extra-European world and the multitude of decisions taken by the Allies in regard to the government of the world which Germany was called upon to ratify without comment or question. If all these things stood alone, it thought the future would be hopeless, there would be no peace but only a truce. "Happily," it comforted itself, "these things do not stand alone." "In the forefront of the Treaty is the Covenant of the League of Nations. . . . It is not all that we could wish it to be, but it is the greatest achievement in world statesmanship. . . . It is this

great instrument for reshaping the destinies of the world that sheds its lustre over the peace terms and differentiates them from any conditions of peace ever laid down by the victors in a great war." It was no good, it thought, prophesying as to what Germany would do. She might decide to sign these crushing terms or she might refuse. "We shall hope for the best," said the *Daily News*, buoyant as usual. "We shall hope that the peace will be signed and that the League of Nations may be inaugurated forthwith and charged with the task of setting up the new order in the world. If once we can secure the Round Table of the Nations we are confident that the perils that encompass us to-day will be dissipated."

The *Manchester Guardian* was equally disappointed yet equally hopeful. The Labour Party denounced the Treaty, but the Liberals, in general, took refuge from their disappointment in the thought of the League. When Liberal opinion in America, which had hitherto supported the President, swung violently round and called for the repudiation of the Treaty and the Covenant on the ground that the Treaty was a crime and that the League of Nations, by establishing the Treaty in perpetuity, became thereby an accomplice of the crime, A. G. G., still editor of the *Daily News*, tried his hardest to dissuade them. (See his appeal to America, "Wilson or Clemenceau," *Daily News*, June 14, 1919.) He was as eloquent as the President himself had been in his speech at Boston on the text of what would happen if America withdrew. "If America went, the League of Nations would expire with her going and all the hopes of a new and better order for the world would perish." But if America went, replied the former American Liberal champions of the League, the injustices of the Treaty would at least be deprived of one powerful guarantee. The Treaty, they argued, "standardised an illiberal Europe and subsidised reaction"; hence it was better for the United States to withdraw her guarantees and leave to the peoples of Europe the problem of executing it.[4] Some important resignations took place from

[4] These expressions were used by the New York *New Republic*, in replying to A.G.G.'s appeal.

the staff of the American delegation in consequence of the terms of the treaty. Mr. Williams, the chief American expert on Far Eastern questions resigned as a protest against the Shantung settlement. Another resignation was that of the Russian Commissioner, Mr. William Bullitt, whose letter of resignation to President Wilson (published in the *Daily Herald*) was as follows:

"My dear Mr. President:

"I have submitted to-day to the Secretary of State my resignation as assistant of the Department of State attached to the American Commission to negotiate peace. I was one of the millions who trusted confidently and implicitly your leadership and believed you would take nothing less than a permanent peace based upon 'unselfish and unbiased justice.'

"But our Government has consented now to deliver the suffering peoples of the world to new oppressions, subjections and dismemberments—a new century of war. And I can convince myself no longer that effective labour for 'a new world order' is possible as a servant of this Government.

"Russia—the acid test of goodwill for me as for you—has not even been understood. The unjust decisions of the Conference in regard to Shantung, the Tyrol, Thrace, Hungary, East Prussia, Dantzig and Saar Valley and the abandonment of the principle of the freedom of the seas, make new international conflicts certain.

"It is my conviction that the present League of Nations will be powerless to prevent these wars and that the United States will be involved in them by obligations undertaken in the Covenant of the League and the special understanding with France.

"Therefore, the duty of the Government of the United States to its own people and to mankind is to refuse to sign or ratify this unjust treaty, to refuse to guarantee its settlements by entering the League of Nations, to refuse to entangle the United States further by an understanding with France.

"That you are personally opposed to most of the unjust

settlements, and that you accepted them only under great pressure, is well known. Nevertheless, it is my conviction that if you had made your fight in the open instead of behind closed doors, you would have carried with you the public opinion of the world, which was yours. You would have been able to resist the pressure and might have established that 'new international order based upon broad and universal principles of Right and Justice' of which you used to speak. I am sorry that you did not fight our fight to a finish and that you had so little faith in the millions of men like myself in every nation who had faith in you.

"Very sincerely yours,

"William C. Bullitt."

Subsequently, Mr. J. M. Keynes, the chief English representative on the Financial Commission and author of "The Economic Consequences of the Peace," resigned because of his disapproval of the financial and economic terms of the treaty.

But British Liberals (with some exceptions, such as Mr. Keynes and Mr. F. W. Hirst, the former editor of *The Economist,* at this time editor of *Common Sense,* who had opposed the Holy War from first to last) clung to the hope that the Covenant would scotch the rest of the Peace Treaty; they could not believe because they would not believe that their aims would fail. The "doctrine of *Væ Victis* without disguise," as A. G. G. frankly described the peace terms, and the Great Charter could not, they declared, co-exist. "Both these motives cannot prevail in peace, any more than both could prevail in war. One or the other must go under." They were still blind to the probability that the one which had never prevailed in the war was unlikely to triumph now.

The Peace Treaty was received with despair in Germany. To the last the Germans had believed that President Wilson's pledges represented something more than words; that the task of the Conference was really what Count Brockdorf-Rantzau described it—the reconstruction of the world through peace. The *Berliner Tageblatt* said (May 8): "Although we were prepared for a good deal and even for everything,

we can only say the Treaty surpasses the worst expectations.'' *Vorwärts* said: ''Such a peace is an attempt to exterminate a nation, not by force of arms, but by means of the most brutal economic slavery.'' They criticised especially the demand (omitted from the summary of the Treaty published in the Allied Press) that starving Germany should hand over 140,000 milch cows.

All public amusements were suspended for a week. President Ebert, in a proclamation, denounced the terms as ''violent, unbearable and impracticable,'' and the German delegation was instructed to submit detailed counter-proposals and ''try to obtain an oral discussion.'' Count Brockdorf-Rantzau was reported to have written two letters to M. Clemenceau. One was described by Mr. Wilson Harris (*Daily News*) as a ''forcible and not undignified protest against the contrast which the Germans discover between the terms of peace and the undertakings on which the armistice was signed.'' The other letter drew attention to the anomaly of Germany being asked to sign a Treaty, involving the creation of a League of Nations, of which Germany was not permitted to become a member. ''The two German Notes on the Peace are pedantic or rude, and perhaps both,'' said the *Times* (May 12). ''The first accuses the Allies of breaking their promise of a Peace of Right. . . . The second note is even worse, for it assumes that the Allies ought to be anxious to make Germany one of the family and to give her the best seat at its councils. . . . This Treaty is almost unique among the Treaties of the world in the careful consideration that its framers have given to the principles of a just settlement as distinguished from claims of ambition or of selfish interest. At the end of a terribly long war, and in the face of a passionate desire for an early peace, they have been at pains to elaborate a political constitution for the future society of nations, and neither in the financial nor in the political terms of the Treaty is there any evidence of a spirit of revenge.''

The German National Assembly met at Weimar. All parties, except the Independent Socialist, declared against sign-

ing the Treaty. The Scheidemann Government was faced with a dilemma. Mr. George Young, the *Daily News* correspondent in Berlin, described it: "If the Government is prepared to sign as things are, they will be overthrown by the militarists riding the Nationalist wave." On the other hand, "If they delay too long they will fall through the Communists raising the workers for a general strike." Either event, he said, meant internal chaos, and confusion in Europe.

Outside Germany, however, no one really doubted whether the Germans would sign. The economic situation would compel them to sign. The mass of the people were broken and apathetic as to their fate, enfeebled in body and listless in mind. "It is in the big towns and industrial centres that the shortage of food is felt most acutely," wrote the *Manchester Guardian* Paris correspondent. "The workman cannot do a day's work on the nourishment he gets. Consumption and other kindred diseases have increased enormously. The children are in a pitiable condition. Many of the infants born in the last year or two have never tasted milk, either human or animal. Rickets is as pebbles on the sea shore. The shortage of fats, which has been serious everywhere, has in Germany been appalling. My informant (a very responsible Englishman just returned from Berlin) says that the other day he saw a woman burst into tears on getting a tiny piece of bacon. At this instant," the *Guardian* correspondent continued, "by a cruel irony, we are engaged here in putting the final touches to the measures which are to be taken if the Germans refuse to sign. It is announced that Marshal Foch has left Paris for the Rhine, and the necessary deductions may be drawn from that. Preparations have also been made for the re-establishment of a complete blockade." [5]

The fifteen days of the time limit went by. The Council of

[5] The following official statement was issued in Paris on May 14. "The Supreme Economic Council met on May 12, with Lord R. Cecil in the Chair. The Council approved the plan of the re-establishment of the blockade prepared according to their instructions. This plan deals with the means and measures necessary to ensure a close blockade of Germany in case Germany should refuse to sign the preliminaries of peace."

Four was engaged upon the Austrian Treaty, the Italian claims, the Russian problem, and in discussing the fate of Turkey. Public opinion in England was engrossed in the fate of Mr. Hawker and the Atlantic flight. On the fifteenth day, the Germans asked for seven days' extension of the time limit, and were granted it, but as Mr. Hawker had by then Fallen into the Sea (May 20), the delay passed unnoticed. On May 26, Mr. Hawker was Saved, after a week of Thrills, Alternating Hopes and Fears. (See *Daily News* headlines.) On the 28, his Triumphal Progress amid Wild Enthusiasm took place—(Barriers Broken at King's Cross; Airman Hero Leaps on Policeman's Horse and Rides through Cheering Crowds to Aero Club)—and there was only room on a back page, alongside a picture of Hawker riding behind the policeman, for the news that the German counter-proposals would be ready that day. The German reply fell flat after the Hawker Thrills, and, besides, as the *Times* said, it was no good the Germans saying anything, because they would have to sign. Their "pedantry and rudeness" were incorrigible. The counter-proposals were audacious enough to aim at the modification of the terms in the spirit of the Fourteen Points. The military limitations, including the complete extinction of the German navy, were accepted, and the amount of the indemnity was not resisted, but an extension of time for the payment of the first £1,000,000,000 to 1926 was asked for, as well as the appointment of a neutral commission to assess reparations. The loss of Alsace-Lorraine was accepted with a request for a plebiscite, and also that of Posen, but strong objections were raised to the cession of Upper Silesia, Memel, West Prussia, and the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine. Germany asked to be admitted as a member of the League of Nations forthwith, and to be given a mandate for her old colonies. She asked for the return of a portion of the merchant fleet, and for a neutral tribunal to try all violations of the Laws of War, by whomsoever committed. The Treaty in its present form was pronounced to be inexecutable.

The text of the German counter-proposals was not, of

course, published, any more than the text of the Treaty itself, but enough was known about both to make the *Times* quite sure that there was no ground whatever for considering any modification of the terms. It was therefore with "astonishment and anger" that the *Times*, June 6, dealt with the "amazing rumour" that the British Prime Minister was weakening over the Allied demands in face of the German counter-proposals. Fortunately, President Wilson stuck up for M. Clemenceau—"a rather unexpected attitude," said the *Daily News*. "Everybody knows that the affairs of the Conference have now been reduced to a personal trial of strength between the French and British Prime Ministers, with the American President repudiating everything for which he has hitherto stood, obstinately supporting M. Clemenceau against the amazing weakness of Mr. Lloyd George." The last hope, according to the *Daily News*, was that the Big Four would modify the peace terms. "The German counter-proposals provide evidence that the German Government and people are prepared to sign a peace containing everything short of their own extinction. . . . As the hours pass we watch the last hope vanishing—in the tides of hunger and pestilence sweeping over Europe and the East with a volume and intensity of anguish never before known among mankind."

A fortnight passed—the Big Four met, argued and wrangled. The crux of the matter was understood to be the question of Reparations. The French refused to modify their demands. Mr. Lloyd George, though anxious to make concessions to the Germans, had, as Mr. Wilson Harris (*Daily News*) said, "the malodorous corpse of his own General Election promises, tied, like the Ancient Mariner's albatross, about his neck."

At last, certain alterations—not fundamental, but material—were agreed upon. A plebiscite was granted in the case of Upper Silesia. The return of the Saar Valley to Germany, if a plebiscite decided this, after fifteen years was not to be contingent upon Germany's ability to buy back her mines in gold. Germany was to be admitted to the League of Nations

"in a short time" if she behaved herself, i.e., carried out the Treaty. Clauses providing for civil, not military, control of the occupied areas of Germany (urged by the British and Americans) had been inserted, but at the last moment these were deleted, a signal victory for Marshal Foch.

The revised Treaty was handed to the Germans at a late hour on Monday afternoon, June 16, with an intimation that it was the Allies' last word, that the Germans must decide to sign by June 21. A covering letter from the Big Four accompanied it. It set out in detail their judgment that the war which Germany planned "secretly and openly" was "the greatest crime against humanity and freedom of peoples that any nation, calling itself civilised, has ever consciously permitted." On that account, the letter said, it could be treated on no other basis than as a crime, and President Wilson's "Force—force to the utmost—force without stint or limit," was quoted to prove that the Allies had never had any intention of treating the Germans in any other way than that now offered. Somebody—said the letter—had got to suffer for the war. Was it to be Germany or the people she had wronged? Their Allies declared their belief that the peace was "essentially a peace of justice." They were "no less certain" that it was "a peace of right on the terms agreed." The German counter-proposals were said to conflict entirely with the Fourteen Points, though certain important concessions in the Revised Treaty had been made. The Treaty, as amended, had got to be accepted or rejected within five days—and, if rejected, the Armistice of February 16 would terminate and the Allied and Associated Powers would take such steps as they thought needful to enforce their terms.

The needful steps were promptly advertised. BRITISH AIR-CRUISERS OVER GERMANY; R.33 AND R.34 WATCHING BALTIC AND KIEL CANAL; NAVY GETS READY AGAIN, were the Press headlines. "The official atmosphere of Rosyth and the Firth of Forth is to-day as severe as when the fighting was on," wrote a *Daily News* correspondent from there. "In other words, the Fleet is once more on a war footing, and

ready to put to sea at any minute in full battle array. The most famous vessels of the Navy are stationed in the Forth, and yesterday and to-day they have been taking on stores and ammunition with the same serious purpose as they did during the war. All leave has been stopped and absentees on leave have been recalled." Food ships for Germany were already held up.

The German delegation left Versailles. They were mobbed on leaving. They advised the German Government not to sign the Treaty. The majority of the National Assembly were, however, in favour of signing; the people clamoured for peace at any price. "The root factor in the situation," said the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent, "is that the German masses are exhausted and starving. You have only to see the children in the German slums, all head and no body, with thin necks and grey, ghastly skins, to realise what a magnificent weapon a blockade is. In Berlin there are scores of thousands of children who have never tasted milk."

The Scheidemann Government resigned. On June 22, the German National Assembly decided, by 237 votes against 138, to sign the Peace Treaty. A note was sent to the Allies conveying this decision but refusing to admit sole responsibility for the war or to hand over the persons named in Art. 227 of the Treaty. The Allies replied that unless the Germans signed "unconditionally" the armies would advance the next day.

Germany Says "Yes": Unconditional Acceptance With Only Two Hours to Spare, said the placards Tuesday, June 24. The German message was: "Yielding to overwhelming force, but without on that account abandoning its view in regard to the unheard-of injustice of the conditions of peace, the Government of the German Republic declares that it is ready to accept and sign the conditions of peace imposed by the Allied and Associated Governments."

All that remained was the formal act of signature. There was a little delay on the part of the new German Government in sending plenipotentiaries to Versailles owing to the difficulty of finding any Minister who would go. Riot-

ing also took place in Berlin, Hamburg and other places, and peace seemed in jeopardy. But at length came the news that the German delegates had arrived and the ceremony of signing the Treaty was definitely fixed.

It took place on Saturday, June 28, 1919, in the Hall of Mirrors, where, in 1871, the German Emperor had been proclaimed, but, according to reporters, the ceremony was disappointing. Two or three Germans, it was not easy to see how many, owing to the crush, signed the Treaty, and then, amid general hubbub, the long procession of the Allies, headed by President Wilson, filed past the signing table. The proceedings began at three o'clock, and at eleven minutes to four the last signature, that of the delegate for Uruguay, was written.

"So ends the greatest war in history," said King George to his happy people as they surged that night round Buckingham Palace.

So it ended. The King's sentence, with an accent on the first word in it, may fitly conclude this study of Liberal idealism during the Great War.

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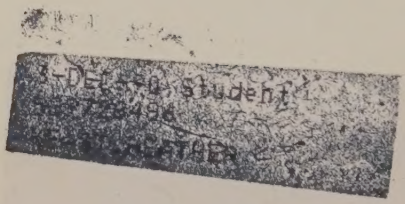

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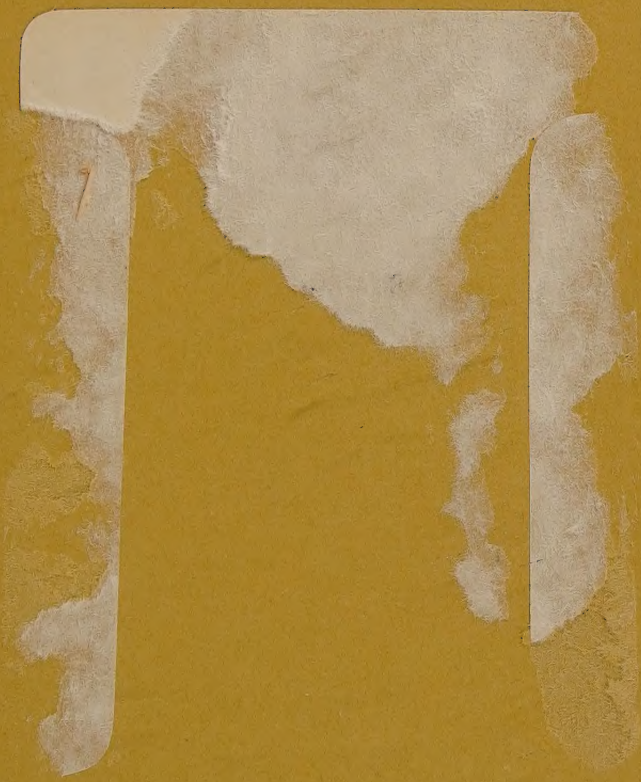

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